



**PHD**

**Understanding the contexts of children's transition from primary to secondary education**

Knight, Perry

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# **Understanding the contexts of children's transition from primary to secondary education.**

Volume 1 of 1

Perry Brett Knight

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
University of Bath  
Department of Education  
November 2013

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*To Zachary, Ezra and Iona*

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## Abstract

*'Tell me and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand.'*

**(Chinese proverb)**

Why is it that children in Year 6 have the ability to construct stories independently, yet at the start of Year 7 the same children have difficulties recalling this knowledge and understanding? Transfer from primary to secondary education has been widely debated for a number of decades. Despite this, Evans *et al.*'s (2010) evaluation of transition concluded that for over 20% of transferring children, the process remains problematic, leading to inconsistent progress, both academically and socially. Transition research has focused significantly on process and procedures, accumulating data from a wealth of stakeholders, but largely neglecting the voice of the child experiencing this process. My research centres on the child, documenting their learning journey through their transition from primary to secondary school.

Galton *et al* (1999b) identify three elements supporting a child's continuation of learning post-transfer: enthusiasm for learning; confidence in themselves as learners; and a sense of achievement and purpose. A significant contribution to these qualities is the socio-constructivist view that 'talk drives learning.' Clear differences in progress, learning and teaching are contained within the microsystems of classroom life. Therefore, to deepen understanding of contexts of transition it is essential to focus research on language and relationships within such systems. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological framework (1979) provides a basis for an analysis of the contribution of microsystem relationships and sub-cultures to the social matrix of different and progressive classroom environments.

My research used an exploratory multi-case study approach (Merriam, 1988a; Yin, 2009). Three distinct models of transfer were identified and examined in depth. Within each of these cases, the learning of a group of children was observed and key points discussed with them throughout the transition process. Therefore, my research explored transition in the broadest sense, through the child's experiences. The research moved beyond myth and procedures in order to understand the tools a child needs to transfer into secondary school to ensure sustainable progress and enjoyment of learning.

Each of the cases had their own model of transfer. The first, Case1, considered children transferring from the more 'traditional' primary school into a 'secondary' school. In

the second, Case 2, children transferred within an 'all-through' school within the same building. The third, Case 3, operated within the experience of Case 2, but transferred from their primary setting into the all-through school (the same school as Case 2). The study expected Case 2 as being the best model of transfer and provider of seamless progression of learning for children in Years 6 and 7. However, each model had case-dependent issues that affect a child's progress within the wider contexts of transition. As a result, the study acknowledged the impact of previous research and further considered this study's impact on learning in meso and microsystems.

Three main, associated arose across the case studies. The first considered teacher provision during the transition period identifying:

- the importance of learning roles and relationships between the child and their teacher, and the child and their peers.
- structures of accountability generated by Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). Within a culture of test-based curriculum structures, the study discusses the impact on children's learning within continual testing and reporting frameworks. It does not discourage the importance of developing basic skills, but considers the purpose of continually tracking and monitoring children throughout their transition period. The importance of standardised test scores is questioned, as these routines are not followed through post-SATs.
- children encouraged to participate in new learning routines and contexts. However, the study identifies an absence of sufficient communication between schools that diminishes consistency of learning opportunities during transfer. In addition, the study highlights differing definitions of independent learning between individual school and classroom contexts.

The second considered barriers to the continuous development of independent learning. It further identified the distorting influence of SATs, firstly on a child's development of independent learning, and secondly, on differences of definition between primary and secondary contexts. It suggested that skills recognised in independent learning are situated within almost singular contexts of primary school. When transferring to secondary school, there is an increased challenge for children to transfer these skills into multifarious contexts.

Finally, the study identified the differing challenges of language demands on a child's continuous learning, specifically

- inconsistencies of curriculum terminology between primary and destination schools.
- differing language clusters that children develop during group work. I observed that these clusters were transferred within each independent learning activity, but were not recognised in the analysis of my secondary classroom observations. This raised the issue of teacher expectations, questioning whether on transfer teachers expect all children to be classified as 'workers', rather than consultant, leader, engineer or technician within group and learning activities.
- the role of 'strong' and 'weak' learning relationships between effective partnerships of 'novice' and 'expert', concluding that weak novice-to-novice relationships affected the continuity of learning.

Findings common across all three cases exposed wider implications for transition. These were compared to the ORACLE studies (Galton *et al*, 1999b; Hargreaves and Galton, 2002). Recommendations offered were to:

- ensure the continuity of learning progression,
- promote active participation in learning,
- improve the quality of children's work during the transition period.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*'Species Homo Sapiens appears to be unique in its capacity to adapt to, tolerate, and especially to create the ecologies in which it lives and grows. Seen in different contexts, human nature, which I had once thought of as a singular noun, turns out to be plural and pluralistic; for different environments produce discernible differences, not only across but within societies, in talent, temperament, human relations, and particular the ways in which each culture and subculture brings up the next generation.'*

Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994, p580)

#### 1.1 The issue of transition

The majority of children in England transfer<sup>1</sup> from primary to secondary school in the academic year following their 11th birthday. To date, research has not solved persistent issues in children's transition from primary to secondary school. Some children continue to fail both academically and socially at the point of transfer. For a significant proportion of Year 6 children skills, knowledge and understanding are not successfully transferred into Year 7, highlighting a disturbing regression in attainment and progress. A study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) concluded that, reflecting on their transition, 21% of respondents felt their primary school did not prepare them for secondary school and 15% of respondents said that they did not settle well in their school (Evans *et al*, 2010). Galton *et al* (1999a) claim that students who have problems adjusting in their new school seemed to be less successful in their schoolwork (p10). They note 'however, teachers, policy makers and researchers are increasingly aware of the importance of giving greater priority to transitions if pupils are to sustain their commitment to learning' (p9). Nonetheless, over a decade later there are still extreme pockets of regression as children enter their secondary school career. Transition will remain problematic and high on the education agenda until an increased understanding of the pathways between primary and secondary models are understood in terms of the child's learning process juxtaposed with the child's emotional well-being.

Transition research has focused on the macro-level of school life (Muschamp, 2011). However, existing research also furthers understanding of classroom routines and

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1. For the purpose of the thesis, *transfer* and *transition* are interchangeable terms.

differences in children's participation within them. Delamont and Galton (1996), and Gorwood (1994) suggest that research recognises the impact of:

- new school buildings.
- the removal of the 'family unit' primary school offers.
- relationships with older peers.
- myths and stories of initiation.
- differences between the curriculum and its delivery.

Recent research continues to investigate how these issues feed into a school's transition policy and procedures (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Galton *et al*, 1999a and 1999b; Gorwood, 1991; Lucey and Reay, 2000). Alternatively, transition research also focuses on children's reflections on their experiences post-transfer (Evans *et al*, 2010). To date, there is little research on the effects of language demands placed on children during transfer or comparative studies of children situated within differing transition models. Muschamp (2011) supports this observation and notes that the difference of language between classrooms is rarely researched in transition. This difference can potentially cause anxiety and disrupt a seamless learning progression.

## **1.2 Why transition?**

What are your memories of your own school days? What memories evoke contentment? What memories evoke anxiety? The reality is that no matter the age, every school day brings complex experiences and change. Despite preparing for change, anxieties can fester and manifest themselves as barriers to progression. This is never more so than when transferring from primary to secondary school. The transition process should be an on-going, seamless step equipping children with skills, knowledge and understanding that are transferrable across contexts. This is not an isolated process and needs to be understood within the continuum of learning. At the centre of the developed systems, orientation programmes and policy documentation, is the child. The child is required to make decisions about what is to come, what to take, and what to leave behind. The child is situated within an on-going process, and each has an individual story to tell.

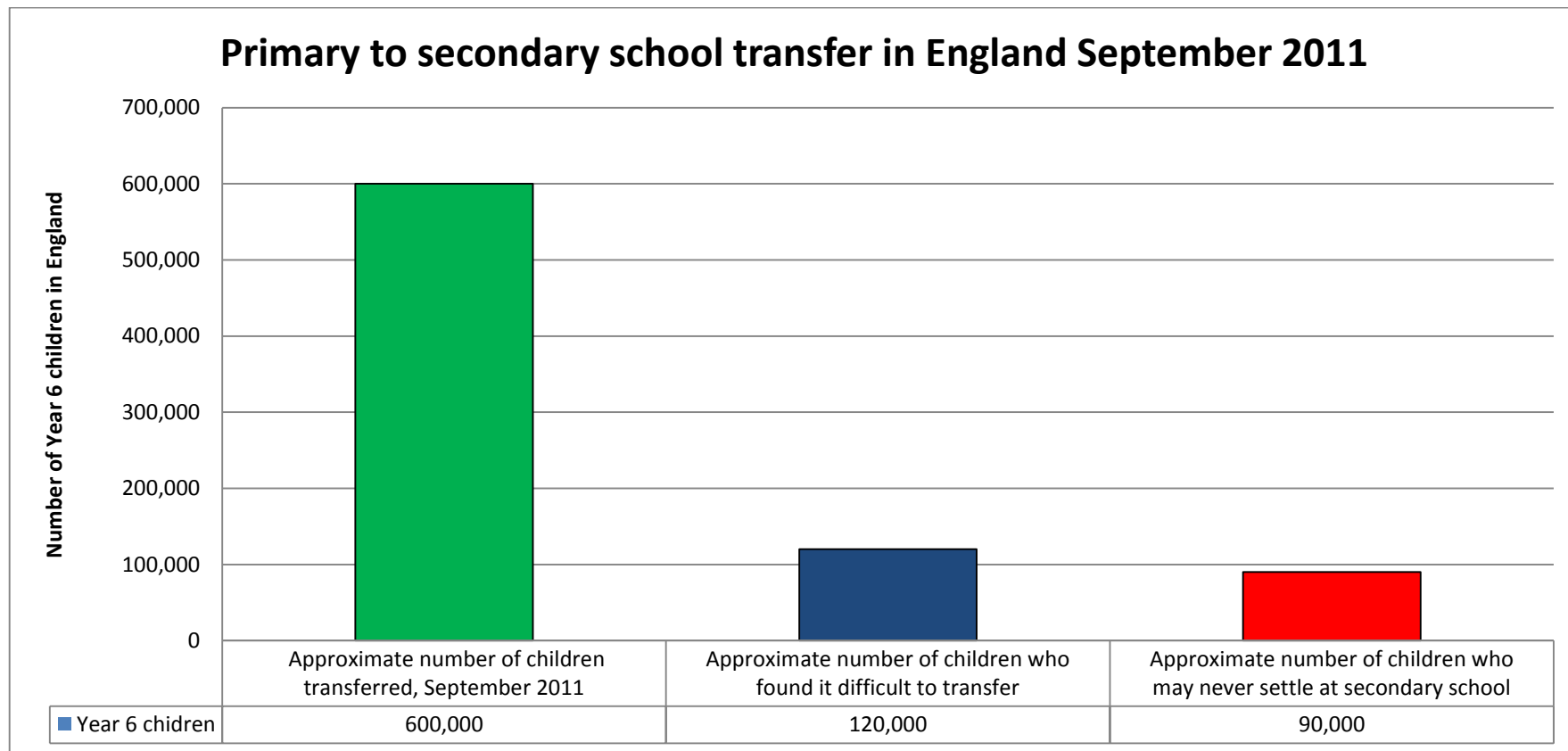
In September 2011 approximately 600,000 children transferred from primary to secondary school in England. This figure is taken from statistical information from the

number of children sitting Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). Figure 1.1 replicates results identified in Evans *et al's* (2010) review of transition. Using the percentages generated by Evans *et al's* study, approximately 200,000 children found transition challenging, and 90,000 children were in danger of never settling into their secondary school careers. Existing research considers that vulnerable children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or children with additional education and emotional needs fall into these categories (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010). Therefore, the figures suggest that either our current systems are failing such children, or that, despite existing research, there is still a lack of understanding about the effects of transition on a child's learning.

During the transition period, children actively participate in a process of supportive calendared events. These include secondary school open evenings at the start of the academic year, and formal taster days at the end of the academic year. Research has considered these and evaluated their impact on children's transfer. However, for many children transition begins prior to Year 6 and forms a continuum throughout their final year of primary school. For transition to be effective, further understanding of a child's journey through the period is essential. Children have many stories to tell, and relate these to what is happening within their present context. Throughout Year 6 expectations are placed on children. These range from academic performance measured by external tests, to the emotional changes early puberty demands. In order for learning to be meaningful and progressive, children are expected to enter a cycle of developing, contextualising, and decontextualising knowledge and skills into a variety of new contexts. In addition, children experience the onset of biological changes contributing to developing characteristics, and changing relationships. Therefore, the transition period challenges comfortable learning behaviours and develops more complex learning relationships amongst peers and teachers.

Transition research requires redefinition in order to make a sustainable contribution to a child's learning journey. There is a need to move away from macro-level research as suggested by Muschamp (2011) to furthering research through the minute layers of changing classroom life. The study attempts to understand the quality of learning interactions between changing classroom relationships and reflects on consistency of language used across Key Stages. Why transition? For transition to be effective, children need to be able to recognise key points within a story both in Year 6 and in Year 7.



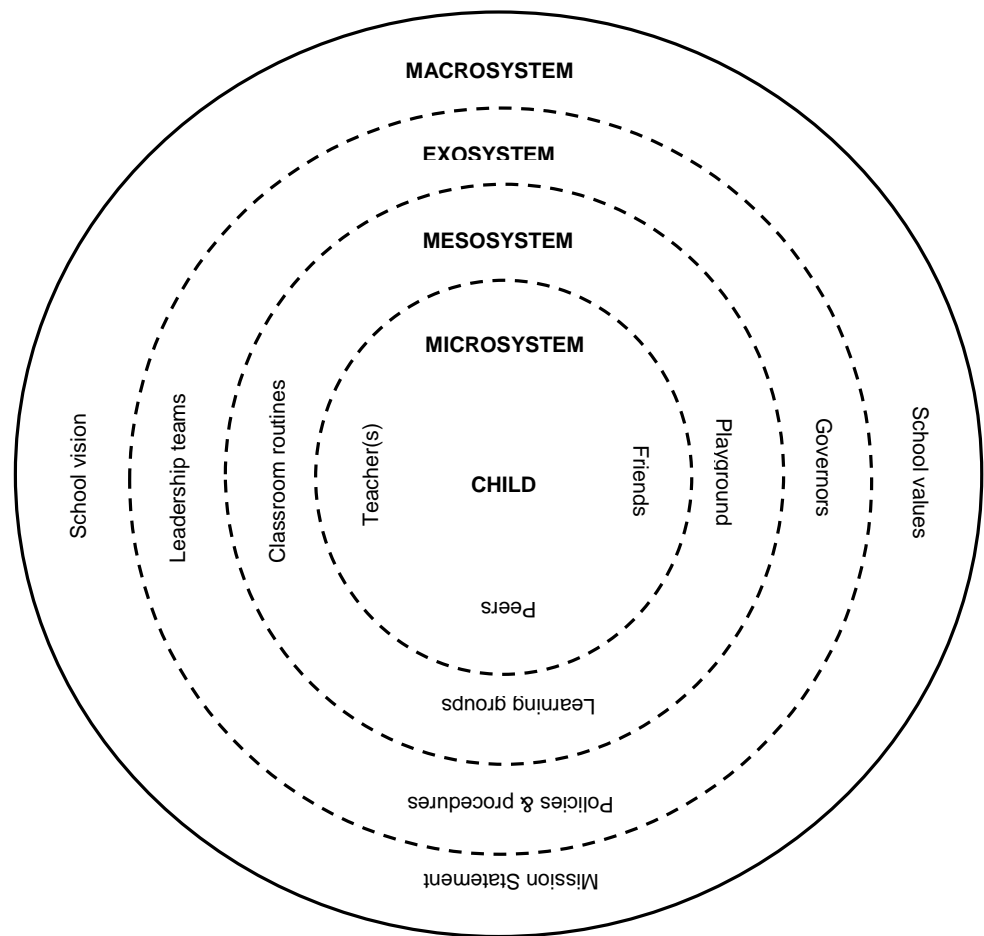


**Figure 1.1:** Approximate number of children transferred to destination schools in England, September 2011

### 1.3 Exploring contexts of transition

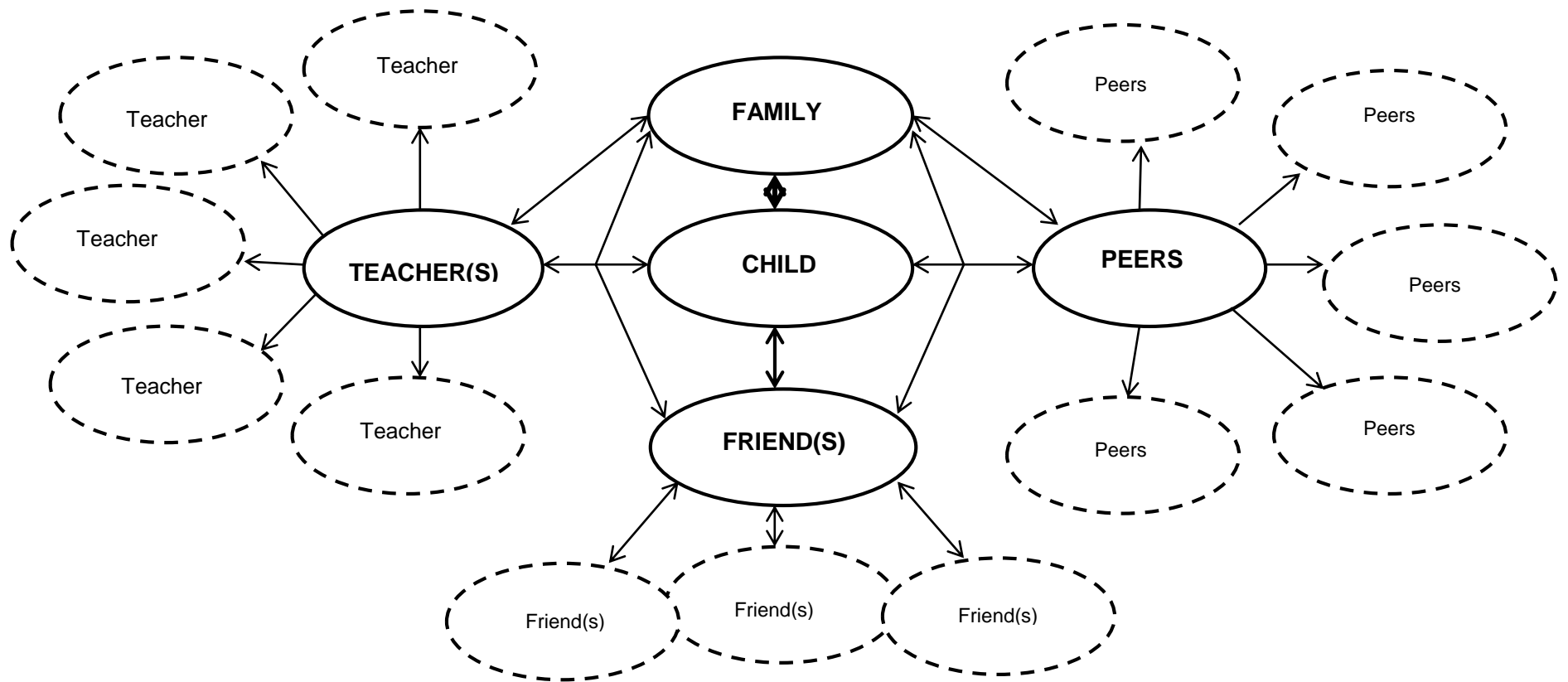
Developing an ecological framework allows the child to be situated in the heart of the study and increases the scope of data collection. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that whenever there is a change for an individual it signifies a consequence, and is an instigator of the organism's developmental process. His analogy of a child nested within a set of Russian dolls identifies layers of relationships and bureaucracy in which the child participates. This conceptualisation suggests that the environment in which the child develops provides continuous layers of understanding in order for the child to operate successfully. The consequence is that the child is continually adapting to change; moving from simple dyadic relationships to complex multi-relationships. As a result, the child is capable of carrying out more than one task and participates in multiple contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Tudge *et al*, 2009). However, within the context of transition, the child's adaptation to secondary school also involves the internalisation of new bureaucracies in order for them to function as an able and progressive pupil. The bureaucracies may differ from classroom to classroom, or teacher to teacher. As a result, transition offers complexities that have the potential to increase hidden anxieties and disrupt the process of continuous learning. Therefore, this study considers layers of adaptation that situate the child from the wider context of the school environment into the minutiae of contexts of microsystem relationships guided by changing interactions and language usage.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) analogy suggests four connected systems in which a child participates and contributes to its own development. These are defined within concentric circles. The *macrosystem* represents the ideologies and beliefs that affect the child. This system is found within the sub-cultures of the remaining three. The child does not participate within this, but is influenced by it. The *exosystem* identifies events that occur in different settings – for example, the decision-makers. The child is not present within this system, but the system affects the outcome of its development. The child operates within the *mesosystem* that connects different contexts - for example, home-school environments. Finally, the *microsystem* is representative of the developing child. It is within this system that a child learns to construct the reality of their world and develops understanding of interactions to inform verbal and non-verbal behaviours. Figure 1.2 redefines these definitions in the context of school. These basic definitions are developed as the thesis progresses. Increased understanding of the role of the child as a social participator in learning contributes significantly to the framework Bronfenbrenner offers.



**Figure 1.2:** Interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's concentric circles within the school environment

This thesis offers a more complex organisation of a child's learning environment and considers the notion of a child transferring into multifarious contexts. It argues that the inner microsystem increases in complexity because the child's destination school does not fixate on consistent learning relationships between an individual teacher, child and their peer interaction. During transition, the constant in a child's life are its caregivers. Transition offers changes in teachers, friendships and peers. Each can have a positive or detrimental effect on the child's learning. The microsystem develops into a variety of individual subcultures, each with individual routines and differing peer groups. Figure 1.3 identifies the impact of transition within the child's microsystem.



**Figure 1.3:** A conceptualisation of a child's changing microsystems during the transfer period

Piaget (1954 cited in Sugarman 1988) observes that a child constructs reality from verbal and non-verbal behaviours. These are observed in participation, roles and relationships within activities. This concept questions whether there is an imbalance of experience and understanding within interactions, and how the potential imbalance will increase or decrease anxiety at the point of change. The classroom provides a rich culture that is woven by 'experts' and navigated by 'novices'. This study questions the understanding of these roles and the impact the relationships have on developing learning. Furthering the concept, Bronfenbrenner (1976) suggests that operating within such properties, or categories, allows a child to move from the 'rhetoric' into the 'reality' of experience and learning. Transition research highlights the 'rhetoric' of secondary school being generated through myth and explicit stories of initiation (Delamont and Galton, 1996). Such research suggests that stories were passed down from previous generations or peers. When understanding transition, the study cannot ignore the generation and influence of myth, but places it in the contexts of classroom culture and interactions. Distinguishing between the process and content of interaction within differing contexts, Bronfenbrenner (1979 p9) identifies '*traditional psychological processes of perception, motivation, thinking and learning*'. However, the ecological framework of studying the organism within its immediate context develops the '*content – what is perceived, desired, feared, thought about, or acquired as knowledge*'. This study explores both the content and processes of children moving through their transition period within the context of their immediate learning experience. This moves beyond the rhetoric of 'what is to come' and 'what has been', as the study evolves through 'what is now.'

To understand the 'now' of transition it is essential to develop understanding of the child's transition story in their everyday setting of the school environment. The 'now' reveals issues and barriers of transition that complemented previous research studies. However, this study explores further issues detailing insights into the changing roles of participants, their use of learning language, and the complexities of developing learning interactions. The most complex issue involved the developing influence of the teacher and child, child and peers. The children's stories dismissed relationships between caregivers and themselves, and focused responses on the complexities of classroom life. Therefore, the study focused on evolving dyadic and group interactions between teacher and child, and child and peers.

### **1.3.1 Research questions**

The thesis explores transition in the broadest sense, focusing on the children's perspective as they transfer from primary to secondary school. Three research questions identify complexities of transition, moving analysis away from policy, process and procedures to sub-cultures contained within the classroom environment. In focusing on classroom learning relationships, the questions examine critical language differences between primary and secondary school settings and identify potential barriers to progress. Identification of language systems supports understanding of the level of language children have in Year 6, and their confidence in using this language in Year 7 to enable them to master learning, enhance conceptual thinking, and to master ideas through exploration and progress. If teachers equip the children with the full breadth of learning-language development needed pre- and post-transfer, the children will be able to ensure sustainable progress. Each question structures debates about complex barriers and issues associated with transfer that furthers a unique understanding of challenges the children studied faced throughout the transition period.

#### **1. How do teachers provide effective skills and experiences to support and challenge a child at transition?**

The first question explores the teacher's role during the transition process. It considers how the teacher can influence a child's perspective and learning journey throughout the transition period. The teacher balances external influences on learning that are not in the control of learning mesosystems and the intricacies involved in developing successful learning interactions. For example, SATs inform learning opportunities within the classroom. In addition, the question investigates:

- the roles of teachers and learners as social participators in learning. The question reflects on how the teacher develops academic and social learning systems and how they are perceived in Year 6 and Year 7.
- the purpose of SATs in Year 6. This considers the opportunities external testing offers participants, and the challenges they present in consistent learning opportunities.

- teachers' perceptions of transfer. This highlights teacher experience and questions whether such experience manifests from fact or fiction.

## **2. What factors benefit or detract from a child's learning at transition? In particular, do socio-cultural settings affect a child's development of independent learning?**

The second question deepens the analysis to include the child's learning journey through transition. It defines learning within socio-cultural settings and focuses the analysis on independent learning skills to support a child to decontextualise knowledge within its primary setting and transfer it into its destination school. The question considers complexities and barriers associated with learning.

- The first focus is the impact of SATs on a child's learning. It extends understanding of the issues of SATs by considering the potential disruption the tests cause to a child's learning journey. This may be influenced by increased curriculum time on SATs preparation, and decreased learning opportunities post-SATs. Additionally, the deliberation includes the impact of SATs on a child's confidence and whether they affect the child's ability to sustain confidence in learning post-transfer.
- The second focus considers the effect that expectations of relationships have on learning opportunities. These may include formal and informal learning situations.
- Finally, the question furthers understanding of relationships by reflection on potential asymmetrical interactions with the minutiae of learning microsystems. These include discussion on the role of the 'expert' and 'novice' in learning dyads.

## **3. How do the language demands of the schools affect a child's transition? Is there a common language between teachers to support children at transition?**

The final question identifies the differing demands schools place on children and their development of language for learning. These include:

- furthering the debate of language clusters associated with hierarchical relationships. It considers how children interact through language to complete problem-solving activities.

- the understanding of 'social cues' within learning relationships. Potentially, this furthers Piaget's concept that for children to construct reality and interact successfully they need to observe verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Piaget, 1954). The question considers the quality and consistency of peer-to-peer interaction throughout the transfer period.
- Investigating how teachers scaffold knowledge and understanding through initiation of debates and questioning strategies. The question examines how inconsistent questioning strategies may cause greater anxiety within the contexts of learning experience.
- consideration of inconsistencies of subject-specific terminology and the effect that varying teacher language may have on learning.

### **1.3.2 Case studies**

The study is a comparative case study between three distinct transition models. Appendix 1 details demographic analysis of the three schools represented in each case.

*Case 1* is representative of a traditional transition model. At the age of 11, children move from their primary school to a secondary school. Case 1 is a Church of England primary school serving a wide range of children in terms of social and cultural contexts. Its catchment has an extreme range, including wealthy families from detached, privately-owned middle-class housing through to pockets of extreme deprivation with social housing. The spread of intake suggests varied understanding of the emotional and social impact transition offers. The school feeds into a rural secondary school, with very few children transferring into other destination schools. This is mainly due to the secondary school's good reputation, locality and the attendance of older siblings. Case 1's recent Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2010a) comments on effective linkage with its secondary partner, in particular physical education, modern languages and, more recently, science.

The school was devastated by flooding in 2007, which resulted in new accommodation and resourcing. At the start of the study there was a change in the senior leadership team with the appointment of a new head teacher who is changing the vision and direction of the school by providing 'strong and effective' leadership and purpose for the school (Ofsted, 2010a). Staff are focused on raising standards through the development and quality of teaching and learning. Children at Key Stage 2 experience a curriculum



delivered by specialists in mathematics for which all children are streamed according to ability. Modern languages and Year 6 sciences are taught by teachers from the destination school. Children are taught in mixed age groups with children in Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 taught together. Throughout the study, Year 6 was fully subscribed.

Case 2 offers an all-through transition model in which children do not transfer into a destination school, or a new school building. An all-through academy serves children from birth to 19 years of age. This school has a formal partnership with Sure Start, and allows for the development of young people and their families from birth. Serving a population where there is a culture of long-term unemployment with families spiralling into extreme levels of deprivation, Case 2 has been through an extensive journey of change. An inclusive community ensures children and their parents foster a love of learning. Case 2 has inspired new learning pathways for young and old, and ensured that all have the right and aspirations to learn. Case 2 resulted from the amalgamation of a secondary school and two primary schools, and opened in 2007. Prior to academy conversion, children and their families entering into Year 7 had low self-esteem and lacked self-confidence within the existing education system. Given its intake of over 40% of children with additional learning needs and 70% whose reading ability was significantly below their chronological reading age, the all-through academy ensures learning issues are addressed from the very start of a child's education. Case 2 serves two social housing estates that are saturated in high unemployment, low income, and families who continually struggle to make ends meet (ACORN, 2010). Both estates are in the bottom 5% of the deprivation index in Great Britain. The amalgamation of schools was not only to ease transition, but to allow a seamless and continuous education for all its participants and community. Across all subjects, there is specialist teacher in all year groups of Case 2. As with Case 1, Case 2 benefits from new accommodation and resourcing to fulfil the needs of their learners and curriculum.

Case 3 lies in the experience of Case 2. Its transition model is contained within the same leadership and curriculum structures as Case 2, but children physically move from one building into another. The sites are approximately one mile apart. Its catchment is identical to Case 2. Case 3 also benefits from new accommodation and resourcing. Sharing the same leadership team as Case 2, Case 3 has a site headteacher who manages the day-to-day running of the school. Year 6 children feed directly into Year 7 with very few children moving outside the academy.

Translating statistics identified by Evans *et al* (2010) in section 1.1 into the participants of each case study in which a total of 135 children transferred into their

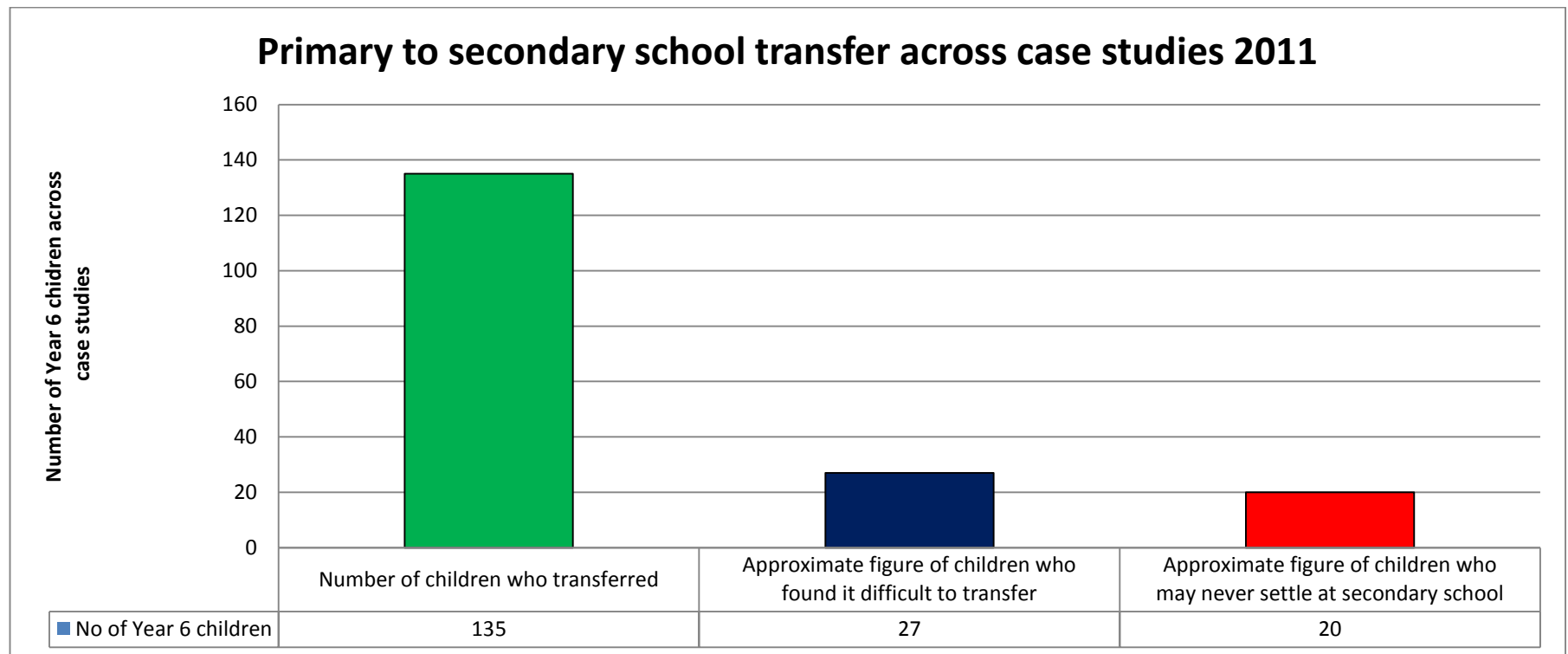
destination school, 27 children may have found their transfer challenging, and 20 may never settle into their secondary school career. These figures are represented graphically in Figure 1.4. To understand possible causes for these statistics, the study uses three distinct models of transfer to see if one is more efficient than the others. It might be expected that the all-through school would provide a seamless transition with children moving within the same school building.

## **1.4 Thesis outline**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Each chapter develops further layers of understanding of the children's transition process and recites each child's story. Initially, the research set out to understand the wider contexts and processes of transition. However, as differing contexts emerged the overarching aims were to:

- explore how a child transfers knowledge and language between primary and secondary school in order to be a sustainable and confident learner.
- understand how, and if, a child can decontextualise existing knowledge from a single context when transferring into multiple contexts.

Therefore, the thesis inwardly develops issues associated with transition from the external factors influencing children's learning opportunities, to peer interactions that transform knowledge and understanding. As a result, the thesis relocates transition research from the macro- to the micro-level (Muschamp, 2011), developing further understanding of confidence in learning, language, and transformation of existing knowledge between learning contexts.



**Figure 1.4:** Children transferring to destination schools based on case study figures, September 2011

The purpose of *Chapter 2* draws from a range of literature assessing the impact transition research has had on children's learning experiences. It theorises potential issues of sustainable learning. The chapter focuses on three developing contexts. First, it places transition in the contexts of socio-cultural perspectives developed by Vygotsky and his contemporaries. It considers the concept of language development as the collection of pre-determined tools. As a result, it correlates language development with learning development, as both comprise a process developed between 'novice' and 'expert' (Bruner 1996). Therefore, learning and talk are explicit tools in a child's cultural and social development (Mercer and Littleton, 2007). Secondly, it considers the impact of middle childhood on learning relationships. By comparing attachment theories to learners actively participating in changing situations (Allen, 2008; Cassidy and Shaver, 2008; Kern, 2008), the chapter discusses learning developed through children pursuing experiences by age-related tasks. Thus, the literature presents further learning barriers associated with culturally explicit age-related testing systems and considers how children 'perceive' reality from learning situations (Goodnow, 2001). Thirdly, it situates transition into Bronfenbrenner's ecological and bioecological framework (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). It does not treat transition as a merger of developmental processes, but places it in the confines of learning interactions between changing roles, relationships and resources (Ceci and Hembroke, 1995). Therefore, the literature places understanding of transition into the context of mesosystem and microsystem analysis.

The research design is child-focused. Strategies to deepen understanding of the child's learning journey through the transition period are detailed in *Chapter 3*. The chapter explores concepts of case study and provides rationale for wider methods of analysis employed. Multiple case studies offer an open book in which children participate. The approach allows the account of the children's real life situation. Therefore, case study moves the research to the 'present', rather than the 'past' or future'. It also allows children to define the situation they are faced with in terms of emotions associated with transfer. The framework identifies validity of Bronfenbrenner's ecological research (Cole, 2003). Merriam (1988a) suggests that case study offers 'a passage of discovery'. Bearing this in mind, the case studies were not conducted with a hypothesis in mind, but began with a blank canvas for children to paint their own portraits of transition. The chapter considers further the use of grounded theory and attribution theory as tools to develop complex and rich data for analytical purposes.

*Chapter 4* discusses the research tools used within the research. The study, divided into three phases of data collection, structured detailed accounts of each case's transition process from the start of Year 6 to the end of the first term of the children's Year 7. Each case had a ratified random sample of children representative of each transition model. Views from each sample group were collected over the course of the study and the children were observed in informal learning activities. In addition, lessons were observed and recorded in all primary schools, and in two out of the three destination schools. The first phase collected viewpoints from stakeholders and placed each transition model in context of the school's policy, procedures and orientation programmes. The sample children were interviewed, and this formed the 'introduction' to their transition experience. The second phase collated views from the sample children detailing their Year 6 experiences and evaluation of the case's transition programme to date. During this period, the children were observed in an informal learning activity of constructing a 'raft.' The final phase replicated Phase 2, but was situated within the destination school.

*Chapters 5 and 6* develop the analysis of data collected. *Chapter 5* offers initial analysis that identifies main themes across the case studies. The chapter is divided into research activities structured within each phase of collection. It plans the children's stories of transition capturing their views and learning experiences throughout the transition period. The chapter allows data to evolve, drawing together key messages from each case. Commonalities of data are presented in case-comparative tables. Differences that emerged are discussed, highlighting barriers and issues associated with transferring the children's confidence and sustainable learning experience into their destination school. The broad concepts of transition are presented, allowing Chapter 6 to deepen understanding of key emergent themes.

*Chapter 6* contributes to the in-depth of the thesis. The chapter, structured by the research questions, highlights key themes documented in section 1.3.1. The chapter considers complex learning and social interactions within the busyness of classroom life (Galton et al, 1999b). Two layers of analysis consider first the changing mesosystems transition offers. This extends understanding of roles and relationships between the classroom teacher and children. The chapter proposes that subtle differences of teacher strategies between primary and secondary school potentially cause anxiety and disrupt the flow of learning. Inconsistencies in the ways teachers teach, questioning strategies, classroom routines and social participation formed likely contributions to a disjointed provision. It considers the effect on all transferring children, not just those categorised within vulnerable groups. The second layer of analysis considers individual learning interactions

between children, and children and their teacher – the microsystem of classroom life. This furthers the debate of the child, and teacher, and interpretation of language for learning and social cues. Comparisons are made between the cases' primary and destination schools. The chapter argues that differences in interpretation can affect a child's short- and long-term learning journey. The data discover the effects of children's hierarchical learning relationships during group interactions, and interactions between the teacher and child. It argues that children are unrecognised 'experts' in learning and have similar tools to their teacher to create and instil new knowledge amongst peers. However, is this skill set developed in their primary *and* secondary school careers?

The final chapter draws together the study's conclusions. It furthers understanding of transition by comparing the impact of each case on the sample children's learning experiences. Drawing on the literature and data collected, the chapter highlights key recommendations for the cases' transition programmes. However, for the children the chapter is not the close. Instead, the chapter is the start of their secondary school learning journey, as one chapter closes another opens . . .

## **1.5 Summary of Chapter 1**

This chapter opens the thesis by establishing issues associated with transition and the potential barriers children face through their transition journey. To date, research does not offer a solution to the academic and emotional impact on children as they transfer from primary to secondary school. Evans *et al* (2010) claim that despite extensive research conducted, 21% of children still felt underprepared for secondary school, and 15% struggled to settle, with some never settling. Research suggests that the majority of issues are associated with vulnerable groups of children (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2008). The chapter asks whether this is acceptable, and questions whether only children with identified emotional, learning and physical disabilities suffer disruption to their learning. Muschamp (2011) suggests that transition research centres on the macro-level of school life, therefore ignoring the intricacies of learning and social development. Muschamp suggests that for transition research to be meaningful and enhance practice, it needs to focus on the child and understand the effects discontinuities in learning and language have on learning interactions, thereby, consciously moving research from the macro- to the microsystem. The chapter introduces differing stories the children have to tell during their transition journeys. It begins to develop understanding of:

- the 'drive' of the study by questioning whether a child makes sustainable learning progress during the transition process, or becomes lesson-confident within learning contexts. It begins to identify the need for understanding issues associated with how children move from the almost insular environment of their primary school, to the multifarious contexts of their secondary school.
- the research design, which consists of three comparative case studies offering three distinct models of transition for the sample children participating within them. Each case study has identical strategies for data collection.
- the research questions that identify different themes of transition. These develop understanding of different learning interactions within learning mesosystems and microsystems. As the questions develop, they penetrate deeper levels of understanding within the bioecological and ecological frameworks of Bronfenbrenner (1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006).

## Chapter 2

### Literature review

*Children need people in order to become human . . . It is primarily through observing, playing, and working with others older and younger than himself that a child discovers both what he can do and who he can become – that he develops both his ability and his identity . . .*

**Bronfenbrenner (1970, Introduction)**

### 2.1 Introduction

The context of an event is defined as the circumstances that precede and follow it (Allen, 1992). Understanding contexts enriches the experience by providing empathy, security and continuity. Transition research provides schools with understanding to develop policy and successful partnerships between cluster schools (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002). I think such understanding allows some children to feel more secure in their changing setting. However, research also suggests that, for some children, the processes of transition disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative effect on them settling into their new environment (Evans *et al*, 2010). This chapter reviews literature on children's transition from primary to secondary school. It considers the broader concepts of transition, and of a school's interpretation of policy, procedure and preparation in an attempt to remove anxieties. The chapter argues that there are deeper issues that underpin transition. Such issues may develop barriers to children's learning and progress. Therefore, an accurate interpretation of contexts associated with transition will have a beneficial effect on transferring children.

### 2.2 Transition

Transition between primary and secondary school is an experience that promotes on-going debate. The emotional and social impact of transition on a child has been well documented over the past decades. Conclusions drawn state that a child needs to make three areas of adjustment during transition: social; institutional; and curricular (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Hargreaves and Galton 2002; Measor and Woods, 1984). Despite such insights, children's progress over the period of transition is still observed as being widely inconsistent, with individual attainment improving, worsening or remaining static (Braund, 2008; Gannon and Whalley, 1975). Braund suggests that it is too easy to make



assumptions about what is best for children by arguing that a lack of challenge at any new school, not only in England but also in the USA and Australia, will have a detrimental impact on learning during each transition phase. Galton *et al* (2003) suggest that no learning relationship is reliably assumed by all participants, and conclude that schools are 'storing up trouble for the future' (p57). Typically research has centred on a child's physical and emotional characteristics, and the practicalities and procedures for transfer; there has been little documented evidence from the viewpoint of a child and their developing sub-cultures within the classroom.

Landmark comparative research into the processes and effectiveness of transition programmes was conducted by Galton *et al* (Hargreaves and Galton 2002) who developed a three-year fieldwork project between 1977 and 1980, in which they used participant and systematic observations and interviews of 58 teachers and 489 children. This was later reproduced using a reduced sample with methodology identical to the original project. These ORACLE (Observational and Classroom Learning Evaluation) studies influenced national and local policies on transition and supporting programmes by highlighting understanding of the demands of transfer on a child, and equipping teachers with systematic tools for evaluation of their existing systems. However, more importantly they highlighted key areas for improved teaching and learning across Key Stages 2 and 3. Conclusions gathered from the second ORACLE study noted pupil-teacher interaction within the classroom had increased by up to one third, however, due to curriculum demands this was matched by the increased time a child spent listening to a teacher whilst the teacher interacted with another child. If teacher interaction has increased, this should have an impact on peer interaction and a rise in standards. Yet over the last 10 years some secondary schools have seen 11% of 11-year olds unlearn reading, mathematics and language skills by the end of Year 7 (McGee *et al*, 2003 p18). One-third of children scored lower in basic skills in the June of Year 7 compared to their Year 6 standardised test scores, and 40% made inadequate progress (Galton *et al*, 1999a; McGee *et al*, 2003). Therefore, it is necessary to move transition research away from anxiety, myth and processes, and develop research on the quality and type of classroom interaction between primary and secondary settings to understand what contributes to sustainable learning and consistent demands in developing a language for learning.

Historically, children make many transfers throughout their school career, generally between year groups and classes. However, transition in Year 7 to a school with new educational systems may cause problems with sustaining children's confidence and attainment in their learning. If existing research has provided teachers with sound

guidelines for process, procedures and policies, why did 21% of school-aged respondents, evaluating their own transition, state their primary school did not prepare them for secondary school Evans *et al* (2010)? Furthermore, 15% of respondents from the same study said that they did not settle well in their new school. Research has suggested that, potentially, transition to secondary school provides a rich, fertile ground for myth to flourish. Delamont and Galton (1996) observed that children's confidence in their learning could be interrupted through stories of humiliation and bullying by older students. New school buildings are initially perceived as being maze-like. These factors, accompanied by change of routines, the need to settle in with new teachers, and an increased presence of male staff contribute to the difficulties faced by transferring children, (Delamont and Galton, 1996). Transition provides a child with emotional and learning reorganisation (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Therefore, for transition to be successful a child needs to reorganise the structures and systems of the quasi-family unit that their primary school offered and learn to separate their social identity into an independent learning identity that is transferable across the many learning situations that a secondary school offers.

### **2.2.1 Historical context**

The Plowden Report of 1966 pays specific attention to a child's growth and development (Thomas, 1990). Placing the child at the very heart of the educational process allows teachers to evaluate their own pedagogy and impact on a child's learning. In effect, understanding the child and their cultural heritage should significantly raise standards within the education system. The Education Act of 1964 and findings of the Plowden report offered an apparent restructuring of the education system. Plowden reiterated the argument from the 1926 HMSO report on the education of the adolescent (Hadow, 1927), that a middle school should become a progressive force in education and not be used to correct learning that has not been effectively developed (Hadow, 1927; Plowden, 1967). In effect, the model attempted to replicate the need to reassess teaching methodology and curriculum design, and to intertwine them with child development. The vision of middle schools was once a powerful and passionate one that was imaginative in design and audacious in its ambition (Hargreaves, 1986 p3). Yet, middle schools disguised transition by introducing a three-tier system of first school, middle school, and high school. In England, 25 local authorities placed middle schools at the very heart of compulsory education (Hargreaves, 1986). Unfortunately, relocating middle schools into a mixture of primary and secondary buildings limited curriculum design and content. Young children were faced with inadequate resources and classrooms that created inconsistent provision. For some, schools were too large and teachers' activities restricted due to non-specialist rooms. Middle schools were

freer to promote alternative curriculums including 'crash' courses in languages and project-based work supporting Plowden's concept of a 'stage, not age' curriculum (Ghannon and Whalley, 1975, Plowden, 1967). Today, due to financial and pedagogical implications, very few local authorities offer a three-tier system, with the majority opting for a more traditional primary to secondary model.

Prior to 1988, there was no statutory control on the primary school curriculum (Wyse *et al*, 2008). Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (1985) concluded that topic work lacked structure and continuity and thus hindered progress for a child. To support curriculum continuity and progression, the National Curriculum of 1988 (Lawton, 1997) provided what was perceived as a child-centred approach to delivery and assessment. Still under the influence of the Plowden report, its rationale was to ease transition with a continuous all-through curriculum developing partnership between local primary schools and their secondary partners. The aim of the National Curriculum was to develop a sequence of meaningful learning from primary to secondary school. Accompanying learning was assessment of key subject objectives. Wyse *et al* (2008) identified four assessment arrangements contained within education reform of the 1980s (DES 1987), namely:

- (i) Ensuring that all pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects
- (ii) Setting clear objectives for what children should be able to achieve
- (iii) Ensuring that all pupils have access to the same programmes of study which include key content, skills and processes that they need to learn
- (iv) Checking on progress towards those objectives and performance at various stages.

(Wyse *et al*, 2008, p11)

The foundations of the objectives were testing arrangements for children aged 7, 11, 14 and 16. The Education Reform Act 1988 initiated rigorous external testing in 'core' subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. Ironically, Gorwood (1994) claims that, at the time of transfer, many children experience difficulties because of extreme differences in the curriculum between the primary and secondary schools. Research suggests the rigours and publication of the National Curriculum's assessment regime has the potential to dominate teacher pedagogy. In terms of transition and curriculum continuity, research also suggests that schools organise curriculum content independently, with very little negotiation between secondary schools and their primary feeder schools (Evangelou, *et al*, 2008; Hargreaves and Galton, 2002; Measor and Woods, 1984). In the experience of the pupils, the child-centred approach offered by the primary curriculum has the potential to make less personal education in secondary schools more alien (Gorwood, 1994). Within this complex

system there are children who require a firm foundation in education in order to equip them sufficiently with skills, knowledge and understanding to ensure sustainability and confidence in lifelong learning.

The Education Reform Act 1988 was intended to raise standards and increase accountability for schools. However, the Act offered prescribed, consistent curriculum models and content across all schools in England. Despite this, the National Curriculum increased teacher workload by demanding rigorous paperwork and continual assessment against clear assessment objectives (Wyse *et al*, 2008). The Dearing Review of 1993 was a response to both Government and teacher viewpoints. The review highlighted the need to support basic skills of literacy, oracy and numeracy (Dearing, 1994). The report identified statutory requirements in the 'core' subjects, including English, Mathematics and Science. In addition, it relaxed subject content for humanities; the arts; physical education; and technologies. In order to fulfil curriculum requirements, Dearing freed up 20% of curriculum time for topic-based work and the delivery of 'core' subjects. However, the second ORACLE study (Galton *et al*, 1999b) suggested that 25% of teacher participants claimed that this made little difference to curriculum coverage.

Despite the slimming down of curriculum content, Dearing (1994) highlighted the need for increased accountability of schools to parents and 'society'. Paragraph 3.34 (Dearing, 1994) categorises Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) as 'simple'. It can be argued that with rising trends of results, school targets are continually increased against rising national averages. Therefore, alongside increased flexibility of provision is increased accountability. Wyse *et al* (2008) argue that SATs can celebrate school achievement. However, they can also increase teacher and pupil failure. Key Stage 3 SATs were abolished in October 2008. It was reported that this cuts the schools' testing burden in half (Curtis, 2008). More recently, the coalition Government has specified further reductions in curriculum time for primary and secondary schools. However, primary schools still face the public external testing regimes that SATs require.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has led to further reorganisation of state education. The organisation of an all-through school merges independent school and state school models. The Telegraph (Paton, 2009) reported that all-age schools will increase by 50% September 2009, representing a steady growth both within the Academy and state structure. More recently under the coalition Government, application for Academy status enables the formation of formal partnerships between primary and secondary schools, developing the concept of all-through schools. Unlike the rapid growth of middle schools during the 1970s,

all-through schools have emerged from strategic planning that allows institutions time to assess risks and consult prior to application.

All-through schools serve children through their nursery, primary and secondary school careers. Such an organisation aims to remove the barriers children face at points of transition and to ensure effective curriculum continuity. Combining models of middle schools and primary/secondary schools, an all-through school allows children to experience the creative curriculum and flexible learning pathways at the heart of Plowden's original vision of 'stage, not age' under a single education system. For example, a child in Year 6 will have the opportunity to attend classes with Year 7 and 8 pupils. Children have the potential to accelerate their learning, as well as stabilise their individual pathways. Therefore, schools have the ability to merge traditional primary and secondary models into distinctive pathways designed to ensure standards are raised. By encapsulating principles of middle schools and the National Curriculum, the all-through schooling model should allow a child to develop within more consistent structures, removing the notion of an impersonal education and divorcing attachments of primary schooling. Children are given the opportunity to observe older peers at work and play, and immerse themselves within the school building, thus, potentially alleviating myth and barriers to learning that were revealed by the original transition studies.

Detailing an in-depth history of education is not relevant in understanding the contexts of children's transition. From this brief account it can be concluded that any reorganisation of education structures should be clearly set out to minimise disruption to learning, and formalise consistency of provision between primary and secondary settings. The Plowden report remains an influential factor in understanding a child's context, placing them at the heart of their learning, thus using teachers as facilitators of knowledge. No matter what structures are in place for learning development and transition, teachers are still faced with the same demands of developing pedagogy to explore wider concepts and deepen learning, as well as to prepare children for external tests to validate school progression and assessment procedures. For example, SATs aim to show a correlation between a child's actual 'attainment' and their actual 'achievement' under a rigid regime of national testing against in-class teacher assessment. At the point of transition, it is an expectation that primary schools release confident and articulate learners who can transfer language, knowledge and learning strategies into Year 7. However, national Key Stage testing policies potentially develop pre-determined cultural barriers that test environments created for some primary schools, particularly those in challenging circumstance. Continuous recording of attainment and achievement may prevent the seamless

progression from primary to secondary school from being realised. This is due to inconsistencies that non-standardised formative and summative assessment offers between schools. As a result, testing policies can have a negative effect on a child's progress when transferring learnt knowledge into distinct and independent learning environments.

### **2.2.2 Impact of transition research**

Daily life is extraordinarily complex (Lucey and Reay, 2000), this can be especially so when transferring from primary to secondary school. Transition should be a continuous, seamless process that equips the child with skills, knowledge and understanding that enables the move from one learning environment into another. Therefore, literature should not portray transition as an isolated experience, but seek to understand it as part of a continuum of learning. Strip down contexts, remove existing systems, evaluations of orientation programmes and policies, and you are left with the child. A child represents a single commodity in a rich learning environment. A child portrays the realism of experience, expectation and knowledge, and is the one who understands what is to come and what to leave behind.

If childhood is a time of innocence and vulnerability (Stainton-Rogers, 1992), then it is also a time to enrich understanding of the world and develop this into powerful and independent identity of the child. Modernist theory suggests that behavioural and emotional change is a breaking of traditional ties that fragment structures of everyday life. Post-modernism argues that everyday changes fragment experience by dissolving structural and social forces (Lucey and Reay, 2000). However, both theories nest the child within discrete structures of transition. If Galton *et al*'s (1999a) perception of a successful learner is one who is confident and articulate, then these views have the potential to both develop and diminish concepts of oneself and one's learning identity. Transition is a distinct move from one structure into another in which participants have the potential to struggle to form social identities in their new and demanding roles. For successful transition, schools have to develop a transparent model in which practitioners view the process as open and honest in terms of assessment and data transfer. Thus, the receiving school collates valid data that enable teachers to assess a child's ability accurately, and ensure successful fluidity of the child's learning. However, the combination of both sociological perspectives offered by Lucey and Reay (2000), and Galton *et al* (1999a) questions the transparency of transferring from primary to secondary education.

In their study involving two focus groups of ten children, Lucey and Reay (2000), argue that children transferring from primary to secondary school experience mixtures of anticipated excitement and fear. This is further reiterated by concluding that transition can significantly impact on a child's perception of 'self' and induce an apparent loss of identity. Further studies (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010) conclude that children at most risk from transfer are those who are younger; less mature and less confident in their learning and language capabilities; have a non-academic background, and are often from deprived socio-economic areas; or have faced problems with their primary teacher. By comparison, those who have a successful transfer are those who are academic; self-confident; and more socially secure with strong parental support (Galton *et al*, 1999b). Other research equates good parenting and good teaching with successful transfer. However, there is no excuse for children in certain social categories failing at this point of their education. If Lucey and Reay's (2000) research concluded that *all* children face anticipated excitement whilst transferring, *all* schools have to ensure successful transition programmes are in place to support a child's developing learning identity. In harnessing enthusiasm at transfer, a dilemma for schools is whether or not to include anxiety resolutions as part of their orientation programme (Delamont and Galton, 1996). After all, research (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002; Lucey and Reay, 2000) concludes that although anxieties fade quickly, they may be replaced by long-term concerns about schooling in general.

Primary and secondary school cluster relationships have the potential to develop a progressive curriculum and learning entitlement. Research cited reflects distinct partnerships between schools in cluster groups. Galton *et al* (1999b) concluded that primary teachers feel threatened by secondary teachers being deemed as 'expert' in their subject. As a result cluster meetings tend to be dominated by secondary colleagues. Secondary schools are caught in a cycle of 'blame' culture due to the potential under-performance and the perceived academic gap in their Year 7 pupils, which has been demonstrated in research (Galton *et al*, 1999b). Darling-Hammond (1996) questions the impersonal approaches of secondary school life and its impact on the child at transition. This is further emphasised by the apparent 'nakedness' of a secondary school's environment with only limited display of children's work. Gorwood (1991) concludes that secondary school teachers are unable to adjust their teaching, and ignore the fact that the child is in their eighth year of education. In effect, Year 7 can be categorised as a 'benchmark' year by teachers reassessing pupil performance and ignoring Year 6 academic data.

Despite children's transition being rigorously researched over the past decades, the issues already identified have still not been resolved within school contexts. Research suggests three transition mechanisms are essential for effective transfer, namely: the process of moving a child physically from one school into another; psychological changes and influences in a child, including the negative impact of myth; and learning within orientation programmes provided by partnership, or cluster schools. However, to deepen transition research further, I believe that there needs to be greater understanding of a child's learning journey spanning primary and secondary school. Understanding the changing learning attachments between child and teacher, and peers, and the way learning behaviours change throughout the transition period will challenge existing knowledge of transfer.

### **2.3 Learning attachment**

During middle childhood, that is, between the ages of seven and 12, there is an increased responsibility for communication with adults and peers (Kern, 2008). If this responsibility is not grasped by all participants, learning can potentially be a 'dull' process (Gorwood, 1991). Donaldson (1978) argues this further, stating that a child does not always understand the adult, but the adult may also fail to understand the child. As a teacher's perspective on a class drives the learning experience, it can still be argued – over three decades after Donaldson's study – that some children begin failing their school careers at the point of transition from primary to secondary school. Primary school learning relationships have the potential to become teacher-dominated when children develop dependency on a single adult figure. Such a dependency affects not only their grasp of differentiating communication for differing curriculum subjects, but also minimises social transactions that need rehearsal for a secondary-style model. Moll and Whitmore (2006) define the socio-cultural systems in which children learn as mutually constructed by pupil and teacher. Therefore, for learning to take place, the teacher has to make the classroom highly literate and understand the social transactions that make up classroom life. Moll and Whitmore also state that by mediating social contexts, children can easily define themselves as learners through engaging in effective learning conversations.

Vygotsky suggests that the core problem for teachers is developing a pedagogy that allows a child to access higher forms of thought through everyday experience, and transform this into theoretical understanding in order to revisit and understand 'everyday' better (Young, 2011). Thus, learning becomes a cyclical event. However, primary to secondary transition breaks this learning cycle through the evolving of complex



relationships in which the teacher relationship develops from an immediate dyadic interaction into a facilitation of complex knowledge. Therefore, if school offers a complex web of attachments with significant others (Meadows, 2010), then these relationships have to evoke positive emotions if each relationship is to be successful. Traditionally the primary classroom can be seen as a 'family' approach to learning, extending a child's social relationship from the dyad of caregiver-child to a more formal relationship between child, caregiver and child-rearer (Super and Harkness, 1986). Bringing a child out of one 'family' unit and into another has the potential to cause conflict and lack of understanding between relationships contained within the triad. Hence, Piaget's (1970) theory of attachment provides greater focus on the interaction between children, rather than child and adult. The adult continually adapts each social setting by changing routines, boundaries and familiarity. Differing from the constructivist viewpoint that social and cultural activity determines the development of a child, Piaget states that a child needs experience in a setting to develop confidence to perform within a series of relationships. Maturation is a result of social experience combined with self-regulation.

### **2.3.1 Attachment theory**

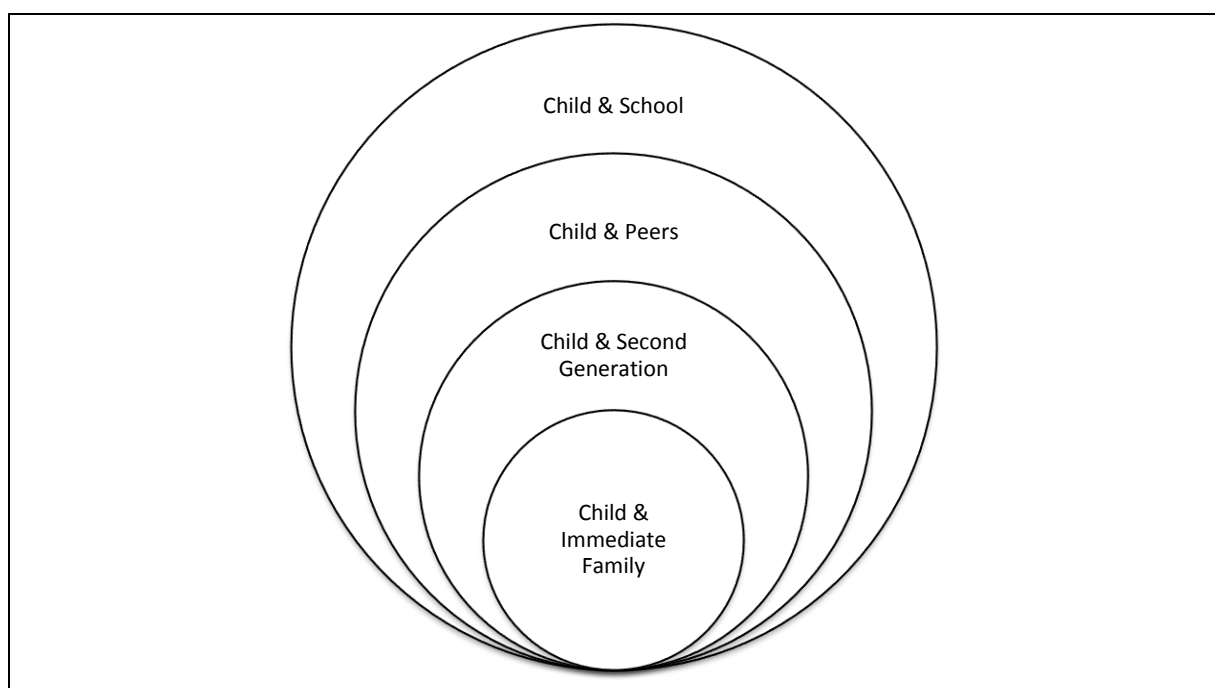
The years of middle childhood are considered to be decisive, discovery years, when children develop attitudes and discipline to learning, and develop a sense of individuality (Plowden, 1967). Up until the turn of this century, research into attachment theories neglected middle childhood. Child development studies suggest that attachment within early years is demonstrated when children form significant and lasting relationships with family, particularly with the mother (Bowlby, 1958; Cassidy, 2008; Piaget 1970). Theories then consider pubescent children and their peer relationships, concluding with theories of adult attachments (Kern, 2008). Despite parents having a great deal of control during middle childhood, research suggests that children do have clear preferences for peers, rather than parents, as playmates. In addition, a child develops within a broader context of home, school and extended peer relations, thus building greater awareness of itself and more flexibility in 'thinking.' As a result, during these decisive discovery years children become collectors of attachments and begin to develop strategies to secure successful relationships within them.

Attachment theory identifies boundaries in which an individual seeks stability and security. Yet Kern (2008) argues that there have been very few studies conducted on age-related attachment, and that additional studies are required to examine how children cope with behavioural system changes. To date, transition research provides effective evidence

for a child's behavioural changes within their learning when they transfer between two discrete systems of education. During this time it is inevitable that peer groups change, as children seek new and lasting friendships to support them through puberty and school life. As well as the three distinct categories of changes recognised, that is, mind, physicality and emotion, there is also preparation for adult life. Expectations of middle childhood are that children become effective and functional members of groups structured within a framework of continually changing participation. Therefore, children need to be taught how to select appropriate tools for a variety of attachments and learning techniques. In order to deepen understanding, learning has to be a series of relationships that develop over a period of time with participants identifying their varying roles within them. This has the potential to allow children to relate to their own history and challenge their culture, thus making communication of knowledge a powerful and explicit tool. Feuerstein's theory on mediated learning (Blagg, 2009) signifies the importance of cultural heritage and the need for teachers to participate actively within a variety of cultural contexts using language to support learning processes. It is not a 'merger' of people, but a collection of people's facts and artefacts that can prepare a child for each stage of life. Super and Harkness's (1986) research on Health Organisations proposes a 'developmental niche' using three subsystems based on interactional relationships of a child. They examine the child's physical and social setting; customs of child care; and the psychology of carers – all of which are said to impact child development and processes of change.

Figure 2.1 conceptualises layers of attachments required by children in order to participate effectively and 'grow' within changing social situations. Its core signifies the stability of attachment between the child and immediate family, which Piaget (1970) identifies as the bond between mother and child. Throughout early childhood and approaches to middle childhood, immediate family attachments develop through relationships of second generation family members, thus classified as secondary attachment figures. As the child matures through each stage of development there is greater focus on child-child interaction, rather than child-adult interaction dictated by experience with social setting, social experiences and self-regulated behaviour. Therefore, peer relationships and the relationship with school are pivotal attributes to the middle childhood experience. School signifies a holistic approach to successful attachment offering a range of child-adult and child-child relations. Yet for learning to be successful, the child needs to negotiate and communicate in a variety of contexts and within attachments that are removed from the family setting, for example, the teacher and pupil, and child and peer relationships. Not only do children need to differentiate between the

relationships of school life, but they also need to develop a rich understanding of the contexts in which learning operates.



**Figure 2.1:** Conceptualisation of attachment theory during middle childhood

### **2.3.2 Changing classroom relationships**

Learning is about developing knowledge, identity and self-belief in understanding wider concepts of the world. Within learning, subjects give boundaries (Young, 2011) and teachers have the power to transform children's enquiring minds. They can create knowledge that is both powerful and can develop social identities of children. If knowledge is social, then its foundation is contained within historical contexts. Therefore, the majority of children will accept this unquestionably through the sequencing of an all-through curriculum with evolving questions that deepen understanding and question experience. By developing knowledge, children have the ability to by-pass their primary caregivers and differentiate between what is perceived and 'objective' reality (Goodnow, 2001). Knowledge takes a child beyond common sense and experience, as it relies on a person possessing understanding about how to analyse an object, rather than experiencing its context (Young, 2011). It can be argued that, through language, culture and socialisation, actual knowledge created can be quite different to how the world is, thus distinguishing rhetoric from reality. Cultural interpretation is therefore the distance between cultural knowledge provided by the

socio-historical context and everyday experience (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). Throughout a child's education, and particularly at each stage of transfer, it is expected that a child translates experience and knowledge already gained into new socio-cultural contexts.

This study argues that inadequate language acquisition and development can cause discontinuity in a child's learning, and central to this has to be the forging of relationships between teacher and pupils. Galton *et al* (1999b) examined a complex web of interrelationships amongst pupils and their teacher within a traditional primary classroom. Therefore, it is vital that we understand how a child transfers from a single highly-complex social system into the multiple complexities that a secondary school can offer. As a result, it seems imperative that successful transition recognises cohesive and continuous learning relationships between primary and secondary school. This is acknowledged within the various studies cited in this chapter. However, it is recognised that as children enter new and existing contexts classroom relationships change. It can be argued further that this is due to the development of the child during transition. Yet, it can also be argued that power relationships within classrooms change radically during the transition period.

Kellet (2010) defines power not as a source, but as knowledge created and controlled by teachers that has the potential to disempower children. However, Manke's (2008) ethnographic classroom study observed power as choice. Manke observed power belonging to both teacher and also pupils, who brought their own agendas into the classroom. The first school that Manke observed regarded choice as a resource, meaning that the teacher had no definite pattern for the day, and children had a choice of resources to support their learning. In contrast, the second school was very structured with good co-operation from the children. Manke defined the teacher's role as being to keep order. The teacher controlled resources, activities and restricted dialogue. It could be argued that the children were passive learners, however, they co-operated well when asked questions and recalled facts. Such explicit changes in classroom practice identified different and inconsistent classroom relationships between two schools. Conclusions considered that there was no right or wrong way of operating. Transition involves children moving from an almost singular context in which children have ownership of the classroom, to a multifarious context involving many changes throughout the school day. It can be hypothesised that, within their primary setting, children share their classroom, therefore there is a greater equilibrium of power. The change transition offers can bring about disequilibrium, removing learning confidence and choice. This concept reinforces Manke's conclusion that neither way of organising learning was better than the other.

In this age of accountability, it is argued that power influences curriculum choice and teacher-led pedagogy. The ORACLE study (Galton *et al*, 1999b) observed different classroom practice between primary schools, and primary and secondary schools. It highlights the impact of Key Stage 1 and 2 tests in dictating a balanced curriculum. More recent studies by Evangelou (2008) highlighted the impact such testing has on classroom relations, setting, and pre-conceived knowledge about individual children. Each assumes that the teacher possesses the power within the classroom, and has the potential to remove learning confidence from the child. As a result, this disequilibrium of power removes choice, challenges learning behaviours, and can increase anxieties during transition.

## **2.4 Learning behaviours**

Bronfenbrenner suggests that very few studies on human development provide effective measures of processes; interchanges between individuals; and interchanges between individuals and their environments (Moen *et al*, 1995). Traditionally research on school transition has been centred on developing theory to inform effective processes and procedures by combining observations from previous literature, and the common sense and experience of professionals (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010; Merriam, 1988a). While Galton *et al*'s (1999b) work was based on systematic observation of classrooms and interviews with teachers and children, its findings are still not enforced in school or pedagogical practice. Bronfenbrenner's approach assumes that process, rather than structure is fundamental to human existence (Charmaz, 2010). However, to understand contexts of learning fully at transition it is essential to develop a research design that places the child at the heart of a bioecological model. This will develop understanding of how a child acts within and reacts to ever-changing environments, by observing how their behaviours change over a period of time.

To date, transition has been classified as a systematic event, but it is a start of a process that needs momentum and understanding to ensure a successful continuation of learning. Language demand dictated by school context and provision has the potential to affect sustainable learning strategies between primary and secondary settings. Therefore, it is vital that professionals understand how a child transfers language skills and strategies from a single highly complex social system into the multiple complexities that a secondary school can offer. Further developing the notion of Bronfenbrenner's concept of an ecological framework, each microsystem prepares the child to function successfully through the understanding of exosystems and macrosystems, influencing each mesosystem by utilising the development of the child's innate ability and skills gained through teaching.

Underpinning this is the child's development and confident use of language to support them in a classroom environment. The macrosystem translates cultures that underpin child development. Existing research suggests that the socio-cultural heritage of the child and teacher can impinge on learning as teachers and children undoubtedly react to each other's language (Meadows, 2010). However, each system operates multiple hidden cultural and social codes through which language can be seen to infiltrate meaning and signpost learning. Immersing ecological theory into the context of Bronfenbrenner's biological framework deepens understanding of transition by placing ecology into a process where people operate within a given context over given time.

Vygotsky and Piaget view dialogue as a process by which children learn explicitly through communication. However, each offers a different interpretation of the dyadic relationships that influence learning. Vygotsky (1986) states that there needs to be a disequilibrium of participants, 'expert' to 'novice', that use communication to scaffold learning. On the other hand, Piaget (1970) fundamentally believes that learning occurs with children talking to children, and that such a disequilibrium of power is unnecessary. Bernstein (1975) suggests that there is a strong correlation between talk in the home and improved learning in the classroom. Each viewpoint contributes significantly to the concept that the child's mesosystem of classroom practice takes place through microsystems. In effect, it is osmosis between Bronfenbrenner's structures that equip a child with powerful and explicit language skills to develop confidence and independence. Each microsystem is about the words and language used, and also how they are strung together to convey deeper meaning. A child in the classroom, faced with powerful uses of language may need more support from a teacher, assistant, or peer (the 'expert') to assist with translation. At pre- and post-transfer are there certain syntactic conventions that teachers take for granted and children fail to understand? If so, these need to be recognised.

#### **2.4.1 Strategies for learning**

Erikson (1995) classifies children as carriers of tradition and concludes that, in order to enhance cognitive ability, schools have much to learn from examining the pedagogy of everyday life. Schools create formal socialisation structures that have the potential to tame imagination. The child's role in this is one of 'collector', rather than 'active participator' of knowledge (Engeström, 1987; Erikson 1995; Tharp and Gallimore, 2006). Traditional education models force age, rather than ability, to be the basis for the segregating structures that conduct children through school. Teachers develop their pedagogy through age-

related tasks that are differentiated to suit the ability of each individual. As a result, children's learning capacity is measured according to age-related tests at key transition points. It is essential to understand and define learning acquisition and opportunities at each transition to ensure a continuous journey of learning. Every child has a learning entitlement with the right to be stimulated in a learning manner and immersed in knowledge so that they can develop critical thinking, understanding and problem-solving skills (Copland, 1998). After all, research concludes that children automatically define themselves as learners, and it is the teacher's role to foster and encourage effective learning environments (Moll and Whitmore, 2006). Therefore, it is essential never to underestimate a child's mental capacity (Copland, 1998), and to develop learning contexts in which all can thrive and be active participators.

Bullock and Muschamp (2005) state clearly that children are believed to be challenged within their learning environment when they learn independently and take responsibility for their own learning. As a child progresses through school and matures, learning develops from effective dyad relationships that offer correction, mutual support, encouragement and guidance, to extended dyad learning relationships that include peers, and group relationships, where the outcome is to form participatory roles within a range of contexts. As a child transfers from primary to secondary school, they need to experience and mediate various physical learning contexts to gain independence of thought. Kozulin (1986a) suggests that Piaget argues that a pre-school child is unable to decentre, but has the ability to absorb meaning through discovery and play. Yet, Vygotsky views that learning occurs not through experience with things, but through using words (Minick, 1987). However, Vygotsky also views play, fantasy and games as important activities for cognitive, motivational and social development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Play is a powerful source of symbolism, and socio-cultural theory suggests that learning occurs through gesture, play and speech systems. If play is an essential ingredient to the development of learning in early childhood, then it can be used throughout a child's education to foster confidence, participation and turn-taking. As a child matures, it is argued that schools neglect play as an element of learning and, therefore, potentially tame imagination. Transition from primary to secondary school has the potential to develop a more 'formal' education through teachers' perception of differences in pedagogy, curriculum and demands of language.

School children are expected to solve problems that other people have set, so education is viewed as a dialogic process (Mercer and Littleton, 2007; Neisser, 1976). For learning to be successful a child needs prescribed tools to access what is being taught and to understand how knowledge can be transferred into a variety of contexts to enforce

meaning and its realisation. Piaget (Magnusson, 2001) identifies three interwoven processes that contribute to, and detract, from a child's learning journey: intrapsychic processes; cognitive processes; and repercussions of artificial intelligence. For learning to be developed it is essential to be able to construct knowledge from perception, thoughts and values, referred to as intrapsychic processes. These are subsequently used to develop learning and intelligence, or cognitive, processes. A child will then be able to differentiate from knowledge that is taught, and innate knowledge developed from cultural context (Magnusson, 2001). However, a child is faced with further processes involving artificial intelligence. This has never been more important than in the rapidly changing learning environments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which teachers prepare children for their futures by developing skills that will be required for them to use technology and processes that have yet to be invented. In order to function, knowledge needs redefining according to the social context in which it is realised. A child pursues two forms of experience: scientific, specialised enquiry; and spontaneous, everyday enquiry (Kouzlin, 1986b). Therefore, a child can potentially develop knowledge from two discrete planes of enquiry using their natural and structured contexts. Language in the primary classroom can often appear informal and unstructured (Muschamp and Bullock, 2007), as the teacher merges both planes. Delamont and Galton (1996) suggest that language of the secondary classroom is more formally structured. As a result, for learning to be continually challenging during transition, children need to adjust to a more formal and direct language that concerns subject-specific knowledge.

Vygotsky conceptualises learning development as a process of internalisation. This is developed within the concept of his 'zone of proximal development'. This zone understands the difference between a child's actual development and a child's potential development. To navigate through the zone the 'expert' can scaffold a task using a process that is developed to enable a 'novice' (or child) to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal that would usually be beyond them (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999; Woods *et al*, 1976). Moll and Whitmore (2006) suggest that the zone is language driven, and, within the process, dialogue structures contribute to the child's development. The *magistral* dialogue is asymmetric, using the voice of a teacher (*magistra*), the voice of a child ('novitiate') and thirdly, the voice of the subject (authoritative). The authoritative voice contains subject-specific materials, including curriculum content and policy. Alternatively, Socratic dialogue is potentially available to all who participate, allowing mutual enquiry that is guided by the 'expert'. If Socratic dialogue is not controlled, Menippean dialogue has the potential to conflict understanding, thus creating a deterioration of the perceived relationship (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999). If primary settings operate on two distinct planes of enquiry using



unstructured and informal dialogue, the teacher will operate using principles of Socratic dialogue, which have the potential to frustrate the recipient. Using the distinction provided by Galton *et al* (1999b), secondary teachers operate on a more formal *magistral* level, and will find it difficult to negotiate and challenge using Socratic dialogue. Both categories are socially appropriate in any social context. Therefore, these perceived differences will have an impact on a child's learning pathway from primary to secondary education. Not only do children need to adapt to new curriculum content, but also to the language structures portrayed by individual teachers across a range of subjects.

#### **2.4.2 Barriers to learning**

A teacher's role is one of controller and facilitator. By controlling and understanding curriculum delivery, they develop effective pedagogies to facilitate learning opportunities. Collectivist theory acknowledges learners as collectors of tools, or processes (Engeström, 1987). For children to be able to control their learning through the zone of proximal development they need to be able to: develop language for aesthetic responses; develop systems for counting; understand schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; develop mnemonic techniques; and develop written and verbal skills (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). This list is by no means exhaustive, but represents demands within the relationship between facilitator and learner. These skills are continually assessed throughout a child's career, usually in written format, evidencing comprehension skills including syntax, spelling and numerical understanding. For some children, a continuous assessment model provides emotional conflict and demeans their confidence in their learning ability. By seeking membership in a socio-cultural system, children need to experience success through confident articulation of the tools set out above. In contrast, a limited toolkit of language has the potential to demean understanding and, therefore, demean learning.

School provides children with academic knowledge and language to create a foundation for sustainable life-long learning. Throughout middle childhood, academia continually tests a child's ability and gauges how their performance compares with others of a similar age (Huston and Ripke, 2010). SATs formally assess a child's reading and written comprehension, and development of numeracy. However, these assess a child on a single day out of four years of academic learning. The child's attainment is publicised against the national average, ignoring actual achievements that, for some, are plentiful. Therefore, testing is not concerned with achievement, or progress of a child's learning. Such systems lose the distinctiveness of progression that the National Curriculum once

offered. Galton and Hargreaves (1996) defined standardised testing as 'high stake tests'. Conclusions from their study cited:

*'it may be that we advance up the league tables in terms of standardised test scores, [but] we will fall behind in the creative thinking and problem solving which emerging economies see as the key to successful trading in the new global markets.'*

(Galton *et al*, 1999b p197).

Pressures faced by some primary schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances that have issues surrounding League Tables and SATs, can limit curriculum provision and diminish language development through continual preparation for the tests. It is interesting to note that the Government's response (DfE, 2011) to Lord Bew's report on the independent review of Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability (Bew, 2011) states that many secondary schools ignore these results when grouping children and use additional tests at the start of the child's secondary school career. Therefore, it can be concluded that SATs are 'essential' benchmarks for primary school performance, but have little impact on the child's learning pathway *en route* to secondary school.

Transition research suggests that teachers start all children at the same level in their first year of secondary school (Delamont and Galton, 1996; Gorwood, 1991). Not only does this view diminish the standards set by their primary teacher, but it also creates socio-cognitive conflicts within the classroom (Light and Littleton, 1994). Faulkner *et al* (2006) suggest that this is a necessary condition for successful peer interaction processes. However, transition is about adaptation to new socio-cultural contexts that ensures continuous learning, and for this to be successful it is essential to remove socio-cultural barriers throughout the process. Adaptation has to be based on mutual learning relationships in which a child's experience of education is understood and reflected in their cultural history (Cole, 2003). Yet as Donaldson (1978) claims, a child does not always understand the adult, and, more importantly, the adult fails in understanding the child. Without confidence within learning contexts children will give way to the 'expert', including teachers, even if the 'expert' is wrong (Light and Littleton, 1994). By re-examining transition research, adaptation can be better understood by understanding how children participate in different learning contexts and how barriers to learning relationships are identified and can be overcome.

## **2.5 Adapting to new environments**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) classifies the child as an organism in an ever changing environment, adapting to the cultural processes each environment offers. For some, adaptation is a normal part of life assimilating the notion of transition with ease. For others, change develops into a phobia that prevents the continuity of 'natural' development and learning. Successful adaptation emerges from inherent legacies provided by the child's history, and understanding of experiences associated with emotional responses to situations (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Yet, successful change and learning cannot be continually associated with a child's history; change needs to consider the impact of learning influences outside the family unit. If one were able to remove biological heritage from child development, the child remains situated within socio-cultural frameworks that influence learning and social relationships. Transition represents change for children. Such change evokes powerful emotions that can support and guide some children, but for others can develop into insurmountable barriers that affect seamless learning. The latter requires further understanding by relocating transition research into cultural processes framed by bioecological theory. This section considers a range of literature that can potentially redefine transfer and transition and assess its impact on a child's response to change; it places transition within bioecological perspectives and their influence on children's learning interaction; and finally places transition into a theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory.

Children are progressive individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, for transition research to be effective, it must move away from wider contextual understanding and relocate into a more refined framework with definitive contexts that allow for intellectual growth and learning sustainability for the child. To understand transition it is essential to develop a greater understanding of the contexts in which an organism develops. There is little control over a child's historical context, as according to Bronfenbrenner this is determined by the collective expectations of the era in which a child is born (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). A child can adopt characteristics of historical contexts displayed by the school associated with the physicality and social conditioning that the regime offers. Child development is central to this conditioning. If such development is defined as an evolving concept of the actual environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p9), transition will automatically alter its properties and the child's functioning capacities to operate within it. In effect, the child needs to sustain existing roles as well as discover new contributions. This suggests interplay between the biological and psychological characteristics of the child. Bronfenbrenner conceptualises these emerging micro-contexts within a merger of historical,

physical and social settings. He suggests that most cognitive attainments are tied up in the contexts in which they are achieved. He, therefore, questions whether a child has the ability to decontextualize information and recall it in a different setting. After all, a child interacts with people, symbols, and objects that continually change throughout their lives.

In ecological terms, successful transition concludes in children changing roles and adapting to their new setting. This change is not conclusive, but develops over time, allowing children to become sustainable and confident learners. Therefore, ecology suggests that a child can react to and understand isomorphic problems and solve these, whatever the context. Furthermore, Cole (2003) views this concept as translucent, where a child can select tools of learning to react within and transfer between contexts. However, tests conducted by Ceci and Hembroke (1995) involved adults learning concepts in one context and then developing identical learning outcomes in another. The sample failed to transfer existing knowledge between contexts and, therefore, failed to solve the same problems using the same knowledge within a different setting. Cole (2003) suggests that objects and contexts develop together and form part of a single bio-social-cultural process of development. If this process is articulated in a child experiencing extreme change, each mechanism has the potential to develop at varying rates, as children have the ability to bypass social influences on their lives, including caregivers, peers and teachers (Goodnow, 2001). Transition is not a merger of developmental processes, but can be defined as an identification of how processes interact with each other with changing social roles, relationships and resources that result in social change.

As Bronfenbrenner developed his ecological theory, very few studies provided measures of processes; interchanges between individuals; or interchanges between individuals and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Transition research has focused on the collective term of transfer identifying improved processes for policy, procedure and resource. It has neglected to understand the child reacting to and within their changing learning environments through face-to-face interactions, and to document experience within each immediate setting. The ecological environment is conceived as a nested system of structures with each contained in the next (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 p22). A child is placed inside various systems, for example the meso- and micro-systems, - Russian doll like - and is forced to negotiate its way through each layer. Transition research has focused on the outside in order to gain perspective of the concept. For it to be effective, research must focus on the inside, with the child at the centre of any ecological framework.

### 2.5.1 Ecological theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory is defined as a diffuse concept in a social context that is divided into a set of nested sectors. A child interacts within their environment collecting and analysing information gained within the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems that govern each setting. Each system has its own proposals concerning its differentiation, and, according to Bronfenbrenner, all influence the development of the person. Therefore, each is open to change over time. Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework comprises a set of clearly defined systems with which a person interacts. A child's development moves from an intense collection of dyadic relationships, a microsystem, to complex multi-relationships, a mesosystem. According to Sugarman (1988), Piaget claims that a child's construction of reality is observed in verbal and non-verbal activities. Bronfenbrenner (1976) further defines these behaviours as activities, roles and relations, thus forming the elements of a microsystem. The microsystem enables a child to develop within an immediate situation, for example the home or classroom. A child transfers these learned skills and competences to operate within the mesosystem in which interconnections are made between each microsystem. For example, a child is classified as a participator within two systems that form a complex relationship, home and school. Bronfenbrenner (1976) adds a further system encompassing these. This is an exosystem in which a child does not need to participate, but through which the child can experience an event that can affect future development, for example policies related to transition. Every situation will have a variety of subcultures and different systems will operate within them. Bronfenbrenner (1979) calls this a macrosystem. In effect each system will provoke a different outlook and understanding of a given situation. Therefore, there is a need to study the systems experienced by children at critical transition points.

Developing Bronfenbrenner's concept further, each microsystem prepares the child to function successfully in the mesosystem utilising the innate ability and skills that have been developed through teaching. Figure 1.2 (Chapter 1) interprets Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework placing the child at the very heart of dyadic interaction. Each microsystem represents an integral part of child development and represents the transformation of perception into reality. This is not a merger of microsystems, but discrete learning processes that will eventually merge as the child matures and settles into each mesosystem. Lave and Wenger (1991) classify a dyad as a basic unit of analysis in which participants develop sufficient mastery of skills to converse fully and to operate in triadic interaction. This interaction can occur within any setting in which participants' form social contracts by developing patterns of rights and obligations that they are expected to apply to

each other (Goodnow, 2001). This is underpinned by a child's development and confident use of language to support them in a classroom environment. Macrosystems translate cultures that underpin child development. As discussed, it is evident that the socio-cultural heritage of the child and teacher can impinge on learning, as teachers and children undoubtedly react to each other's language (Meadows, 2010), which can affect how the teacher listens to the child, and *vice versa*.

### **2.5.2 Bioecological theory**

Tudge *et al* (2009) suggest that Bronfenbrenner's theories are in a continual state of development. Bronfenbrenner's initial ecological theory identified the relationship between a person operating within their context. His bioecological theory furthered this concept by broadening the framework to include the process and time in which the participant operates. Therefore, the framework comprises process, person, context and time. The understanding of the microsystem is central in moving Bronfenbrenner's theories of ecology into bioecology (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Chapter 1 identified that existing transition research contributes to the macro-level of understanding (Muschamp, 2011). Existing research identifies a moment in time in which a child lives. This is part of the child's history influenced by the processes and procedures school offers. To deepen understanding of contexts of transition, it is essential for research to evolve into complex levels of analysis within meso- and micro-levels. Therefore, this level of analysis is required to tell the whole story within the designated period of child development offered by transition (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994).

The proximal *process* considers the interaction between the participant and their environment. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) suggest that the proximal process is more powerful than the contexts in which it occurs. Processes influence the functioning characteristics of the *person*. To function successfully the child requires intellectual, motional, social and moral growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Therefore, any interaction the child makes becomes progressively more complex as tools and understanding continually develop. The *context* considers the effects on the child whilst changing environments. It is suggested that children have the capacity to influence and shape their environments (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994). Therefore, during the transition period, children have the ability to adapt and participate actively in learning in their destination schools. However, this idea does not provide explanations for why some children struggle to settle within their secondary school. Considering the impact of *time* further deepens the analysis of children's

adaptation to new environments, and increases understanding of their journey through the transition period. There is, therefore, an intrinsic relationship between the process and time.

Tudge *et al* (2009) examined twenty-five papers that were written post-2001. Each paper contributed research using the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory. They concluded that 21 of them relied on 'out-moded' versions by placing significant influence on the context, but ignoring the process. Trudge *et al* questioned whether Bronfenbrenner offers a single theory within one system, or a true framework that interrelates within each system. However, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory offers four contextual systems associated with time. Therefore, the relationship between process and time continually interrelates each system in which the person participates. Adopting the framework to the understanding of transition considers the changing relationships and interactions of the child. Each layer of Bronfenbrenner's theory affects the child through process, context and time. However, moving transition research inwards toward the microsystem, and away from policy and procedures, paints a picture of the child who is required to operate within changing education systems according to their age, and not their ability.

The argument considers whether a better education is one of increased achievement and attainment, increased basic learning skills, or confident socialisation within learning environments. Therefore, questioning whether achievement is biologically inherited, or achieved through a child's capacity to develop learning through social participation (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994). The bioecological framework considers the person as developing 'objectively' with limited external influence, or 'subjectively' using emotional responses to situations (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Each involves experience and the person's response to experience. Bronfenbrenner and Morris define the context of experience, saying:

*'feelings [ . . . ] are characterised by both stability and change: they can relate to self or to others, especially to family, friends and other close associates. They can apply to the activities in which we engage [ . . . ] But the most distinctive feature of such experiential qualities is that they are emotionally and motivationally loaded [ . . . ] A significant body of research evidence indicates that such positive and negative subjective forces, evolving in the past, can contribute in powerful ways to shaping the course of development in the future.'*

(Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006 p727)

Therefore, better education is situated within complex structures of learning. To increase attainment a child needs to adjust to learning contexts that promote increased attainment within the context of socialisation experience. A child is required to define inherent qualities of their biological history, and redefine these within the subjective context provided by their teachers. Each involves a significant attachment between the child and family, and the child and teacher. Using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework, the child combines their family's historical influence on schooling – the objective influence – and their emotional response to learning through socialisation – the subjective influence. For some children, the gap between objective and subjective will be wider, potentially contributing to the 15% of children who find it difficult to settle into their secondary education (Evans *et al*, 2010), including those who never settle.

### **2.5.3 Developing the theoretical framework**

As discussed, transition research, to date, has centred on the macro- and exosystems of transition that include relationships between the child and family, school, caregiver and teacher to inform overarching policies and procedures to help ease the transfer process (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Hargreaves and Galton, 2002; Measor and Woods, 1984; Osborne *et al*, 2006). To make a real difference transition must be understood within the microsystem of the bioecological framework of child development, measuring children's emotional response to varying situations, their expectations and frustrations, and differentiating the rhetoric from reality. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues ironically that much data collected in social research removes the sample from their natural setting by placing them into a laboratory. Ecological theory from the 1970s allows a child to be studied within their context and for data to be collected and analysed from the source. Placing the research into a bioecological framework allows for objective and subjective analysis of a child moving through their transition period as a historical fragment of their learning journey. The purpose of my research is to understand how a child transfers knowledge and language through the transition process in order to equip them to understand and develop into sustainable confident learners. Therefore, it is essential to situate the research within the processes, people, contexts and time that transition offers.

Typical classifications of the child within ecological studies explore family size and make up; parents and peers; and social class and ethnicity (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). In terms of academic learning Bronfenbrenner does not explore the classification of teacher and child; and child and 'learning' peer. Researching a single microsystem within the complex web of child development deepens understanding of a child within their learning



environment and develops understanding of how the microsystem affects the change that transition demands. Therefore, a child will be a member of many language systems and will pass from one to another without thinking. In bioecological terms, each system is classified as a microsystem in which the child has a dual audience involving two discrete language systems. It is expected that children continually adapt to their environments by continuous development of interaction, participation and learning socialisation. The framework does not measure the experience, or its representative emotions. Instead, the framework provides understanding of how a child develops learning ability throughout transfer. As the child develops their school career and transfers from primary to secondary school it is essential that they develop within the many microsystems that each classroom offers.

Developing this concept further, Moen (1995) suggests that interpersonal relations are embedded in larger social contexts of society, community, economics and politics. Thus each is dependent on the genre of any specific given time. Therefore, in order for participants to develop, there is interplay between the person's characteristics, social context and developmental process. Each is shaped by social change in which a person's make up of biological and psychological processes contribute significantly to protect and prepare them to become a fully-integrated organism (Magnusson, 2001). Significant change will have the potential to reshape a learner's identity and position within the mesosystem. There is an expectation that learners have the capacity to scan and retrieve information from prior learning to new learning environments. Within any given context each participant is expected to understand external, as well as internal, features of the organism's mental representation, for example, how a learning stimulus is represented in any given context (Ceci and Hembroke, 1995). Transition to secondary school represents on-going change that for some will be a continuous journey in their education, moving seamlessly between microsystems developing their role within the learning environment. For others, passing between each microsystem will hinder progress and attainment as processes need to be learnt for each new learning environment, learning roles renegotiated, and confidence developed to interact within the 'duel relationships' that the microsystems offer. For transition to be effective these activities need to be understood from the perspective of the child situated within the bioecological framework.

## **2.6 Summary of Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 draws on the literature to consider the impact of change on a child during the transition process. It considers that, despite a wealth of research focused on transition,

a significant number of children still find transfer to secondary school difficult. For some, change is inconsequential in terms of their learning journey, for others, change can signify deep-rooted anxieties that disrupt their learning process.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first defines transition and places it within a historical context: this section has two subsections. The first subsection defines transition in terms of child's continuing journey through the transfer period, considering the many 'twists and turns' transition offers rather than portraying a single pathway. The second discusses the impact transition research has made on children's learning, considering the categories of children who fail at the point of transition; and whether features of 'good parenting' and 'good teaching' minimise the effects. Development of learning, consideration of the use of language as a 'social' act and placing the development of knowledge within social contexts, are discussed. Drawing on Vygotsky's theories of learning, the section identifies the development of knowledge and language skills, identifying language as a taught mechanism, and recognising that children are required to 'rehearse' their roles within learning environments. The section begins to understand how children develop the ability to learn between contexts.

The final section compares and contrasts Bronfenbrenner's ecological and bioecological framework, placing the child into the different layers of his theories and demonstrating the effects change has on learning and context. It relocates the research from the macro-level to understanding the development of interactions in learning within the microsystems of classroom life. Therefore, the theoretical framework amalgamates Bronfenbrenner's ecological and developing bioecology model by placing the microsystem at the heart of the study. The need to explore the changing classification of relationships between the child and teacher, and the child and peers more deeply is identified. To understand transition further, it is essential to understand:

- how different language systems affect a child's transition.
- the interplay between each participant at any given time within the transition period.
- the on-going changes children face at transition.

## Chapter 3

### Research design

*'Heritability can make its clearest and most scientific contribution when it is incorporated as a key element of the Bioecological Model, where, paradoxically some of its liabilities are turned into assets.'*

**Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994, p 170)**

#### 3.1 Introduction

The literature review in the previous chapter identified three key issues associated with transition. The first considered the discontinuity of a child's learning throughout their transition period. The second highlights a child's ability to transfer learning from their primary school into their secondary school. The third concerns different demands of classroom language that have the potential to disrupt continuity of learning. For this study, I have decided to compare and contrast three distinct models of transition to assess how each issue is embedded, or resolved, during the transition phase. This chapter explores the methodology most suitable to sustaining effective collection and analysis of data during the research period.

Transition is not an isolated event. Therefore, the study reflects a journey through transition from the start of Year 6 to the first term of Year 7. At the outset, this study aimed to evaluate transition in terms of the social aspects of school life – the original task was to explore and understand existing social studies of transition. This included a further analysis of the ORACLE studies and the psychological effect transition has on a young person's life, but it became obvious that transition issues had moved beyond the anxieties of changing pedagogy and myth (Delamont and Galton, 1996). The literature identified inconsistencies of learning that changing contexts required. It identified additional anxieties of children provoked by different teachers and their methods. However, the literature neglected the importance of changing behaviours between key transition events. It did not capture the children's journey from the very start of Year 6 to the conclusion of Year 7. This present study considers transition as an evolving process of learning that, for some, developed into

a positive social process. For others, the barriers to learning that developed seemed insurmountable.

Informed by the literature, the research questions consider three aspects of children's learning: the social setting; relationships with the teacher; and the language demands. Each strand identifies the influences of change; how change can manifest itself into barriers to learning for individuals; and how change interferes with transferring skills, knowledge and understanding into new contexts. The research questions are:

1. What factors benefit or detract from a child's learning at transition? In particular, do socio-cultural settings affect a child's development of independent learning?
2. How do teachers provide effective skills and experiences to support and challenge a child at transition?
3. How do the language demands of the schools affect a child's transition? Is there a common language between teachers to support children at transition?

### **3.2 The argument for a qualitative approach**

The research design describes how the research questions are made operational. In order to understand the contexts and experiences of transition it was important to listen to the voices of children depicting their learning journey through their transition period. This was in parallel with capturing a clear picture of the aims and practices of their school and teachers. Therefore, this study lent itself to qualitative methods that gave scope to reflect on, analyse and review children's learning journeys and experiences.

Traditions of quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis have both been used to inform recent theories of transition (Evans *et al*, 2010; Evangelou *et al*, 2008). Quantitative approaches examine relationships between codes, and measure phenomena. For example, Evans *et al* (2010) collated data through systematic searches of relevant databases and websites. In addition, data were retrieved and analysed through government publications published by the Office for National Statistics. Use of such tools allowed conclusions and recommendations to be made by identifying key themes derived from statistical analysis. These included identification of groups of children who successfully, or unsuccessfully, transferred from primary to secondary school. Children were grouped by

identified educational needs, socio-economic class and cultural heritage, and gender. Evans *et al* concluded that certain groups of children from advantaged backgrounds with no additional educational needs or disabilities have an increased chance of successful transition. The 15% of children who did not transfer successfully were categorised as vulnerable, and tended to be from deprived socio-economic communities.

Evangelou *et al* (2008) categorised groups of transferring children by identifying themes derived from extensive interviews of professionals, parents/carers, and Year 6 children, and used three distinct methods of data collection. Firstly, they interviewed local authority representatives, collecting views through a structured instrument. Secondly, they surveyed children and their parents using questionnaires. Again, this measured frequency of responses to identify key categories of successful transition and influences of choice on selecting a secondary school. Choices included reputation, a good Ofsted report and older siblings attending the new school. The third and final method employed involved 12 case studies of semi-structured interviews of children, and teachers who were in charge of transition. Commonalities of responses influenced categories of successful and unsuccessful transfer. Each study highlighted key issues of transfer and potential solutions. However, it is evident that quantitative methodologies do not offer elements of student voice and learning participation, and, as a result, they do not deepen understanding of transition, but recite existing understanding of research and theories. While this approach is less significant in my study, quantitative techniques were used initially to order and classify data.

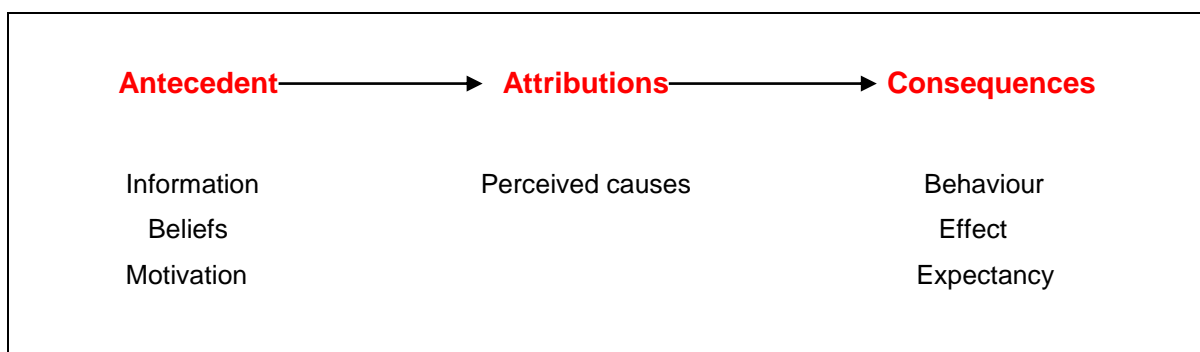
Polarising this notion, Patton (1980) argued that qualitative research should provide perspective rather than truth. Thus qualitative research not only has many interpretations, but has the potential to deal with critical problems of practice (Merriam, 1988b). This paradigm contributes to theories emerging from the data, in order to understand complex inter-relationships among all that exist (Punch, 2010; Stake, 1995). It can be argued that qualitative research has the potential to produce vivid, unrealistic interpretations of data (Merriam, 1988b), yet also creates a holistic picture that is required when developing understanding of context-specific information for each given case. Therefore, qualitative analysis of data produces a reality of first-person dialogue that allows each voice to be heard, rather than categorising factual images that can be unrepresentative of the sample groups.

Qualitative research permits a deep understanding of transition as a socially-constructed and context-specific model. It allows for use of a collection of non-hierarchical

methods to seek understanding of contextual worlds, providing a bridge between knowledge as a reality of experience and knowledge as a collection of concepts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Young, 2011). Young (2011) suggests that knowledge goes beyond common sense and experience as represented in each case's transition model. Qualitative research is a pivotal tool that permits engagement in 'critical conversations' to construct and analyse contextual understanding of juxtaposed models of transition by removing each from procedural activities. Joniak (2011) developed Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) definition of qualitative research by stating that quantitative and qualitative are not merely different ways of doing research, but different ways of thinking. In effect, qualitative enquiry allows research to be situated within an activity, continually interpreting a set of material and practices that make the world visible (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), and, if we are to study lives and their social interactions, we must study them within contexts as they unfold, and not separate them into episodes (Joniak, 2011 p33). Examining participation within given structures has allowed a close examination of changing behaviours between school contexts. Behaviours have not been predicted and used to control events; they have evolved through qualitative inquiry, by continual examination of the setting. An interpretive approach seemed the most appropriate for the rich data that were required for this study.

The literature (Delamont and Galton, 1996; Galton *et al*, 1999b) suggests that the perceived factors that surround transition are those of achievement, success, love, health, and friendship. In effect, transition processes and procedures can be placed into the framework of attribution theory. This is a theory that details scientific studies of common sense and understanding, classified as a naïve theory (Fösterling, 2011). Attribution theory attempts to combine description and scientific theory to understand how common sense works; it creates the qualitative 'why?' question and focuses not on causes of changes in behaviour, but on the perceived causes of behaviour. Fösterling (2011, p5) develops his definition by citing psychology of the obvious through causal explanations of events in everyday life. Transition fits comfortably within this model, as the purpose of this inquiry is to select methods through a thorough research design that probes the 'why?' and develops understanding of the impact of transition on children's lives. It does not use predictions of behaviour to control data collection, but develops Kelly's model of attribution theory as a three-phased inquiry (Kelly and Michela, 1980; Figure 3.1). In the model, the antecedent considers prior events and beliefs, that is, the ideologies and existing models of transition. This contributes to my preliminary investigation, the collation of data concerning contextual information including ideals of transition, and motivation of staff and children as the transition year progresses. This feeds into the second phase, the attributions associated with transition that, identify perceived problems and changes of behaviours that will occur

as children move into a new contextual environment. Finally, the third phase signifies the consequence of transition on a child's attainment, behaviour, affect, and expectancy of transfer. Using attribution theory in the context of qualitative inquiry allows for rich descriptions of a child's social world and continual questioning of effect as the child's transition progresses.



**Figure 3.1:** Kelly's model of the theory of attribution (Kelly and Michela, 1980)

### 3.3 Framework of research design

The study's original approach was one of action research with my professional role embedded into the life of two discrete transition models – an all-through school and its satellite primary school. Action research allows a social process of collaborative learning between researcher and sample in order to bring about effective change to different groups of people in an informed and systematic manner (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2012). Thus, methodological decisions were initially influenced by my role as a researcher situated within the context of two research schools. This equipped me with a detailed understanding of their context that questioned the extent to which transition impacted on a child's learning between the ages of 10 and 12. Immersion within the culture of the school as an active participant in its senior leadership team, allowed the adoption of action research as a framework for the research design. Action research offers a methodology that will support mechanisms for reflection and ensures context-specific change.

Initially, action research allowed me to enhance my understanding, and improve my practice, of transition. The school provided two differing models of transition. The first was an all-through school with Years 6 and 7 in the same building. The second involved children moving from the satellite school into a new building. The intent of this study was to make informed change to the research schools' existing transition programmes. Kemmis and

McTaggart (2005) provide an action research model of Plan – Act – Observe – Reflect. This model forms a spiral of evaluation through planned research activities and reflection on their effectiveness. For example, the model incorporated elements of classroom observation and planned open-learning activities that fed into the final design of this study. On the one hand, action research methodology provided a framework in which I was an active participant. This raised many ethical considerations; in particular, there was conflict between my roles as researcher and practitioner. Each had an influence on the children's responses and openness to reciting their own personal learning journeys. On the other hand, action research restricted the focus of this study by placing it in a context-specific framework impacting a single institution. It forced the focus to be on teacher interpretation, rather than a child's reaction to their transition model. Such a method had the potential to force this study into the examination of the macro-level of transition. However, the aim of this study was to move beyond macro-level analysis and embed understanding in the microsystems in which children operate. Therefore, my role of participant researcher changed to that of independent researcher. This challenged my preconception of transition, and gave greater depth to the study by allowing me to introduce further scope to understand transition across contexts, beyond the situation in which I participated.

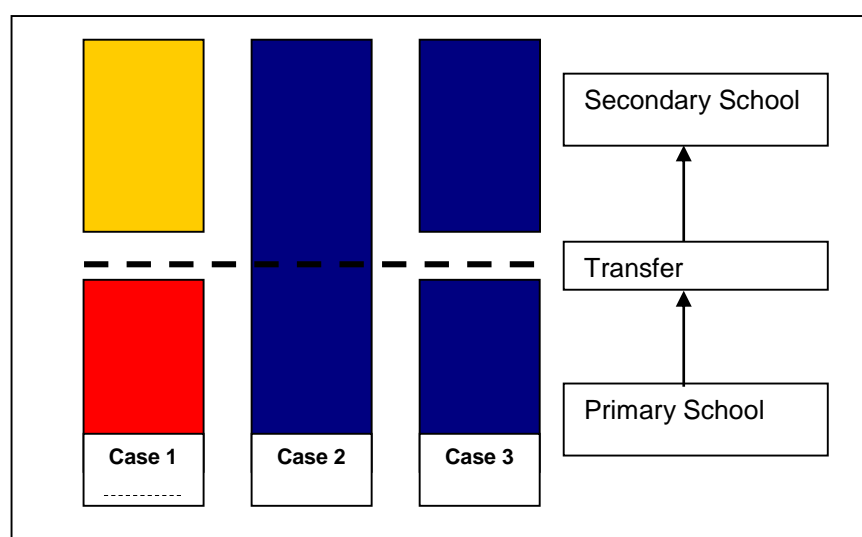
Literature suggested that research on transition should move away from the macro-level of school life (Muschamp, 2011) into developing an understanding of the learning demands placed on children during their transition. In order to bring about effective change – and bring the child into the experience – my role changed from action researcher investigating broader concepts of transition in my institution to researching the effects of transition within microsystems of learning. Therefore, methodological considerations transformed into identifying transition models as cases for study, with children participating as 'social actors' within them (Yin, 1984).

### **3.4 The case study**

This study is a multiple case study of three unique transition models (Figure 3.2) in three institutions over a period of four traditional academic terms (Stake, 1995). Case 1 is a rural primary school predominantly feeding into one secondary school at Year 7. Case 2 and Case 3 are distinct strands within an all-age Academy. They operate from two sites approximately one mile apart. Case 2 houses children and young adults from the age of 3 through to 19 (with a formal partnership with Sure Start catering for children aged 0 to 3 on the same site). Case 3 houses children from the age of 3 to 11. Cases 2 and 3 have a



single senior and middle leadership team. Throughout this time stratified random samples of children representing each case were tracked from the start of their Year 6 to the end of their first term in Year 7. This allowed for tracking of development, progress and behaviours throughout the pre- and post-transfer periods. Field notes, observational data and interview data were collated. Combining multiple ‘dissimilar’ methods of data collection not only reinforces theory, but also provides similarities and differences between each case (Eisenhardt, 1989). Bronfenbrenner (Cole, 2003) cites three conditions to validate ecological research: (i) maintain integrity of real life situations; (ii) be faithful to the larger social and cultural contexts from which the subjects come; and, (iii) be consistent with the participants’ definition of the situation.



**Figure 3.2:** Visual representation of the 3 transfer models

A case study is an in-depth exploration of a specific instance that can be used to illustrate a more general point (Cohen *et al*, 2009). It gives a topic freshness that very few research designs offer (Eisenhardt, 1989). Empirical reality underpins ecological theories developed by Bronfenbrenner and complements a case study design that is particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate phenomena variables from a given context (Yin, 1984 p10). A multiple case study has been preferred because it allows for an in-depth comparison of transition events between three unique models. This design allows for the collection of rich comparative data, providing evidence to evaluate provision through the eyes of a child. In effect, a case study is a research design that allows exploration of the whole child situated within the natural contexts of their school life.

Case studies offer a passage of discovery, rather than a confirmation of pre-existing knowledge, and, therefore, seek insight and understanding as well as interpretations and construction (Merriam, 1988a; Stake, 1995). Merriam (1988a) and Yin (2009) suggest four types of case study approach: exploratory, descriptive, interpretative and evaluative. In order to create a design that responds to the initial research question it is essential to explore these four concepts and their varying social groups (Robson, 2002) by evaluating the provision each case presents. Yin defines the exploratory approach as a starting point to develop an hypothesis, while explanation and judgement come through the evaluative approach. This study uses elements of each. The exploratory approach identified each case's initial understanding and interpretation of transition. It allowed viewpoints from different stakeholders to be explored against the context of policy and procedure that governed each model. The evaluative approach considered the impact of each case on children's learning and development throughout their transition period. Using Bronfenbrenner's framework represented in Figure 3.3, it is important to examine both the setting, and also the relationships and processes that each setting offers in order to understand and analyse language of dyadic groups. Understanding the exosystem of the way in which each transition model was constructed through policy, provision and self-evaluation procedures contributed significantly to the culture and context of each case. Effective and meaningful analysis was supported by evaluative and reflective frameworks that were in place throughout each phase of the research. These comprised a self-reflective journal and further exploration of specific key points highlighted within the data.

Case study research is an explicit attempt to gain a holistic view using multiple sources and data collection techniques (Punch, 2009). In effect, it allows the research to go beyond initial impressions and concepts of transition, to exploring commonalities and differences that each case offers. The three cases developed for this research provide distinct models of transition, with particular and unique experiences, as children embark on their journey to secondary education and participate interactively within each microsystem. It is essential that these are vividly and accurately represented in each strand of data collection, and more importantly in their naturalistic setting. To ensure this, the design gathers 'live data' in the samples' 'live' situations, rather than collecting second-hand data as historical transition studies have done (Bryman, 2001; Denscombe, 2008). In order to collate a chronological narrative of events, the design offers three phases of data collection crossing two clearly defined models of primary and secondary education. Merriam (1988a) suggested that individual perspectives of situations are more realistic than an objectified truth. Hence, each phase of this research assesses actual occurrences, rather than the analysis of policy and school documentation that generates the 'quasi-truth' of transfer. The

cases examine components of transition within three natural settings in order to discover common methods that support or detract from sustainable and confident learning. This gives each model represented in Figure 3.2 a reality, and removes misconceptions that reactive researchers may have.

The research design tracks children throughout their transition process. Figure 3.3 provides a conceptualisation of a merger between Bronfenbrenner's ecological and bioecological framework. The research design is situated at the heart of this framework. The bioecological framework encompasses the research design, and provides a wider picture of each case transition model. Each of the three case studies considers proximal processes of the differing transition model in which the children participate. However, all the models share the same objectives, as they require processes to ensure that every child transfers as a confident and progressive learner to the destination school. The processes of transition structure the entire framework as they consider a child's learning and social participation within the contexts of representative schools, and the time-frame that governs transition. Each case study represents Year 6 children – the person – participating in discrete transition models. The complexities of the participating person are further individualised as each progresses using differing notions of time. To date, transition research has focused on chronological events signposted by school procedures and policies. Thus, the process is calendrical, forming a set of chronological patterns that researchers have theorised by collecting empirical data at these key points (Delamont and Galton, 1996; Galton *et al*, 1999b). A child during transition follows three overlapping processes:

- the official transition process as laid out by the local education authority.
- the primary school process that closely resembles the local authority framework.
- the personal process of the child that can be traced within the chronology of events.

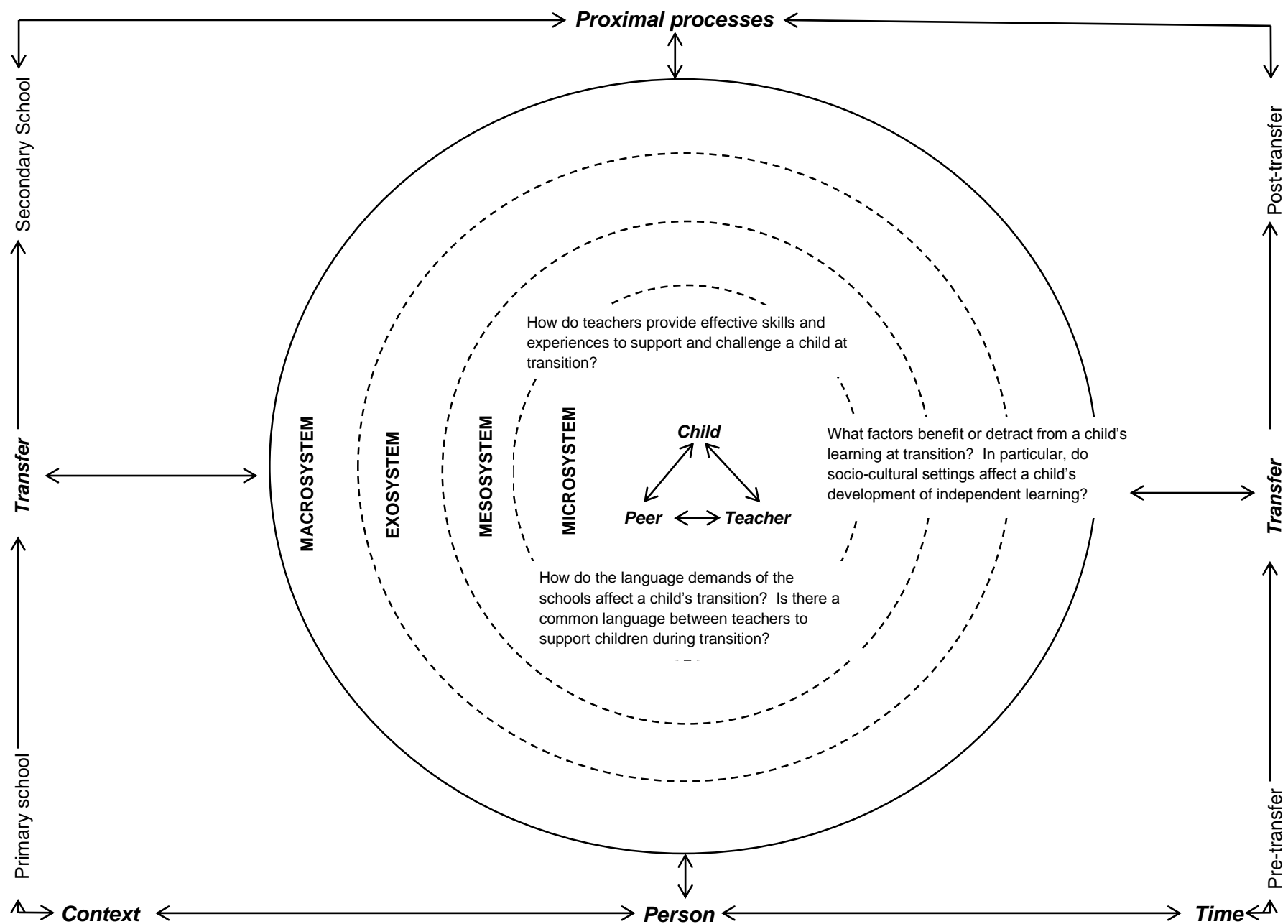
For most schools in England, it is expected that children transfer at a certain age, under a rigid process of documentation and data exchange. This is classified as a tool to equip teachers to settle their classes quickly. The transfer processes begin in September of Year 6 when children visit prospective secondary schools; in October applications for places are submitted to the Local Authorities. Then transition seems dormant until March when parents are informed of places allocated and, finally, formal transfer arrangements

begin in June after Statutory Assessment Tests. In total, focused transition activities in mainstream schools last for not more than one week per academic year. However, throughout this year, transition is very much alive to Year 6 children, and research highlights the fascination and myth that pre-empts entry into secondary education (Delamont and Galton, 1996; Lucey and Reay, 2000). Historically, very little data have been gathered between these established points and previous research has tended to be context-specific, rather than process driven. In order to inform an effective model of transition there needs to be greater understanding of human development in middle childhood and the effects of transfer on sustainable learning. The scope of the three research questions are focused within the inner systems (Figure 3.3) and identify components of changing learning interactions between the child and their teacher, and peers.

### **3.4.1 Reflections on the cases**

It was important not to replicate other case study research on transition; therefore, it was imperative to define each case from the outset of the study. A significant proportion of transition research defines either the primary school and its transfer secondary school, or a group of children and their teacher as a case. One example concerns a study on transition that defined its case as a secondary school mathematics department and its primary feeder schools (Coad and Jones, 1999). The purpose of that case study was to understand the continuity and nature of mathematics that Year 6 pupils experienced when they transferred schools. Tools used for data collection involved curriculum analysis, class observations, questionnaires and teacher interviews. Pedagogic approaches and curriculum continuity are identified within the case. The study acknowledged a lack of momentum at the end of Key Stage 2 and addressed the continuity and progress of the National Curriculum, it also highlighted key inconsistencies of transition. These included differences of:

- curriculum coverage between the secondary school and its primary feeders.
- the setting of pupils.
- teaching approaches.



**Figure 3.3:** Conceptualisation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological and bioecological framework in relation to the study

This Coad and Jones' (1999) case study focused on a single secondary and multiple primary schools, and concluded that one quarter of primary schools should adopt the practice of their secondary colleagues. Despite findings that contributed to development of understanding of the increased anxieties of children during their transition due to inconsistencies of practice, the defined case further identified many practices of mathematics within it. Its definition of a secondary school and its feeder schools had the potential to result in bias towards the secondary school, as it compared a singular practice against a number of other practices. Therefore, informed by this case study, it was essential for me to define my cases to encapsulate a broad and balanced view of transition. More importantly, it was essential that the area studied increased understanding of transition and ensured that the samples involved were not the actual cases, but participators within them.

The initial concept of this study was to recount a child's learning journey through their transition to secondary school, as each child has a unique story to tell. However, the children were active participators in existing transition models that were unique to their schools. To gain insight to a child's learning through operational elements of school practice, it was essential to define a case in which children's developmental microsystems interacted with macrosystems of school policies and procedures. Therefore, each case examines an operational transition model that contains many social actors within it (James *et al*, 2012). These cases do not replicate the multiple institutions offered by Coad and Jones (1999), but offer an analysis and evaluation of the multiple aspects of transition in which children are the key element.

The selection and identification of cases determined the contribution this study makes to transition research. Therefore, each case is an independent transition model as represented in Figure 3.2. Each case provides discrete models in which macro- and microsystems interact. Each shares a common objective in which children transfer successfully into their secondary school. Underpinning each is a common transfer protocol outlined by Government and Local Authority policy and procedures. Each case offers:

- information to parent and child about the transition process and application to transfer school.
- open evenings for parents in their child's primary and new secondary environments.
- a rigid application process for parents that follows Local Authority and the school's admission protocols.
- induction days for Year 6 students during the last term of the academic year.

The strength of each case is that it allows a comparison and evaluation of how children participate within these 'norms.' In addition, they provide consistencies of practice across local authorities. Therefore, comparisons between translations of policies can be evaluated, as well as the effect of these on a child's continuous and sustainable learning.

Each case offers challenge. The first case is situated within a rural community in which children predominately transfer into the same secondary school. The assumption is that this choice is influenced by the secondary school's reputation and the expectation that Year 6 children will follow in their older siblings' footsteps, though such assumptions can influence the findings of a case study. In addition, the case primary school has a new headteacher in post and the focus, ethos and direction of the primary school are improving rapidly. As a result, its swift rate of change had the possibility of detracting from the significance of transition and relationship with its main secondary school. Cases 2 and 3 share the same Senior Leadership Team, but have different Primary School sites. Case 3 is a new primary partner whose school became integrated into Case 2. At the start of the study, Case 3 school staff were at the start of their journey of change and developing a new ethos to unite with Case 2. This new regime and way of working can influence the perception and trust of a research programme, potentially increasing bias for a preference for old ways, rather than a readiness to adopt new ways. The conflict of my old role as Senior Leader and new role as Researcher required sensitive handling and reflexivity to ensure my own bias did not influence the accounts and analysis of each case.

### **3.4.2 Working with children**

For this study to be effective, my cases needed to be the whole model of transition that included the experiences of children within it. The literature review suggests that transition research is an evaluation of events, rather than listening to children involved within a model over a period of time. The challenge of this methodology was to ensure that the focus remained on the child, rather than on the model. Working with children is complex, especially as children's responses can be unpredictable. Meeting each sample group for the first time brought questions and anxieties to the study. In Case 3, a child asked why they had been selected, with another replying, 'Because we are good.' One child sat quietly in the corner of the room, while another boldly stated, 'I am ready to go to big school because my dad says I will learn more', and with that one statement, the study began.

Despite many years of working with children, this short exchange raised issues of power and the influence that I had as a researcher in their own environment within their own

school. Manke (2008) suggests that power within the classroom belongs to both teacher and pupil. The teacher is a resource for knowledge, while pupils have the ability to choose what to learn and what not to learn. Therefore, if knowledge is power, having choice is just as powerful; this analogy summarises my position at the start of the study. I had entered an environment in which children had knowledge of their school, their anxieties and their participation in the school's transition model. I had to decide which strategies would permit me to extract their knowledge and analyse it in order to make a significant contribution to their transition. Power was twofold: the children were the resource; the teacher 'developed' this resource. I was the provider of the resource and structured the research activities accordingly. Therefore, my role as teacher suddenly became insignificant as the journey of transition was part of the child, not structured within policy and procedures interpreted by the school.

Kellet (2012) suggests that there has been a distinct shift from research 'on' the child to research 'with' the child. Such research has allowed researchers to listen to the child and has also allowed children to become actively involved within the research design. Christensen and James (2008) state that it is a typical assumption that children know and understand the research process. As a result, children will automatically engage within the research process. This assumption removes the analogy of a child as 'social actor'. In order to participate within given models and structures, participants need to understand social behaviours, status, needs, rights and differences (James *et al*, 2012). Relationships cannot be static, they require progression and trust. James *et al* (2012) considered methodology to account for how a child is constituted and understood in society. Within this case study, the purpose of the sample groups is to ascertain how they operate within social structures of each transition model, and how these structures can empower continuous learning. For validity, and to remove bias, it was necessary for me to remove my assumptions about how children develop through the transition period, and to ensure that there was an open and honest rapport between researcher and researched. This reflexivity allowed me consciously to ensure all voices were heard and represented within the analysis and discussion of the study.

Alderson (2008) concluded that effective research with children requires equality, insight and respect. These attributes were paramount in my methodological decisions, which, above all, were underpinned by ethical considerations. The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) guidance on ethical practice was at the forefront of every decision considered for this research design. Bryman's (2001) consideration of informing all those associated with research collections was adhered to, and consent was



obtained from all participants, and each had the right to withdraw at any stage of the process. In particular, this was made clear to the children. Prior to research starting, permission was obtained by the headteacher and governors representing each case. Letters were distributed to the sample children to gain access and permission from their parents or guardians (Lucey and Reay, 2000). Prior to data collection, the sample children were given an overview of their involvement within the study, and how it would benefit their transition. Before each research activity, children were given an update of the research and an overview of how the activity would contribute to it. Children could withdraw consent at any time.

As children's talk would lead each phase of methodological decisions, the possibility of disclosure was considered, and a decision was made in advance that disclosure to appropriate authorities would have to be made if it was observed that there was a perceived risk to individuals (BERA, 2004, Point 27) – for example a child protection issue – there would be no hesitation in disclosing this (Lucey and Reay, 2000; Perrott, 2010). Ethical implications concerning student voice activities and interviews of stakeholders are not similar. Authentication of data was received from participants by confirmation that the transcripts contained an accurate account and detail of responses. To ensure authentication of student voice activities, feedback was given to each sample group. After confirmation of accuracy, transcripts were anonymised and people's privacy conserved (Busher and James, 2007).

Throughout the research I had to take my role as professional teacher and researcher, situated in an environment in which I had worked as an Assistant Principal for a number of years, into consideration. Misrepresentation of my role as researcher had the potential to limit data collection and invalidate a realistic interpretation of each case's transition model. Therefore, it was essential that my role be understood by participants, particularly during lesson observation activities. This goes beyond the observer effect described by Denscombe (2008) where he states that people may feel embarrassed and try to disguise their normal practice. Working closely with teachers in Cases 2 and 3 proved very rewarding, as they managed to distinguish my role as researcher and made limited alterations to their regular practice. The sample groups of children understood my 'new' role as researcher and eased into this transition with minimal effect on data collection. In fact, knowing me allowed the children to relax quickly and each activity to start promptly and openly, which maximised use of time and responses.

Misrepresentation of role goes far beyond relationships situated in the design. Values may intrude into the study at any point in the process, from choice of research area all the way through to interpretations and conclusions (Bryman, 2001, p22). It is incumbent on the researcher to be aware of their own values and to work reflexively (Greenbank, 2004; Perrott, 2010). Forging what is perceived to be right against its actual reality relies on the judgement and clarity of analysis of the researcher. Punch (2010) defines value judgements as moral statements that are difficult to use in empirical data that support theoretical understanding of given issues. Empirical data are not interested in right and wrong, but of a true representation of relationships of cause and effect. Thus, positivist values contained within the research design and data differentiate significantly from fact. In order to be discrete and present a true reflection of my findings, it was essential that I divorce myself from my former professional role, and allow my values and moral judgements to dictate a perceived reality, not passing judgements on what I had observed, but to cite exact realism in my research.

### **3.5 Grounded theory**

What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the levels of activities and social relations in which humans engage (Harding and Hintikka, 1983). Experience has the potential to interfere with reality, therefore creating a perceivable truth. Data form the product of each case study and generate theory (Charmaz, 2005; Punch, 2009). Use of grounded techniques allows simultaneous data collections and analysis between cases to inform the next phase. However, the experience of the researcher will inevitably define actions, assumptions, and interpretation. Merriam (1988a; 1988b) emphasises that what seems to be true can be more important than what is actually there. This indicates a vivid, unrealistic impression that invalidates analysis and potential theories, so it is essential to match one's findings with the reality that the case studies offer.

Grounded theory develops layers of analysis starting with a simple coding system that generates themes and sub-themes to support analysis. Charmaz (2010) classifies this as initial codes that develop into focus codes tested against extensive data. Unlike Punch's (2009) definition of grounded theory as a method of discovery, constructivists do not assume that data simply wait to be discovered (Charmaz, 2005). Theory is an establishment of 'tools' that support learning contained within the study of phenomena, rather than the methods of studying it. It creates a systematic approach to analysis and a means of controlling data collected. Implicit within the construction of new knowledge is

language (Bryman, 2001). However, language is deemed to be both a barrier and a creator of new codes, from which the researcher's experience will decipher the truth and reality of data presented (Punch, 2010).

### **3.6 Answering the research questions**

My research design explores transition in the broadest sense, and focuses on children's perspectives as they transfer from primary to secondary school. The research questions identify complexities of transition and move analysis away from policy, process and procedure to sub-cultures within the classroom environment. By focusing on the teacher-pupil dyad and the pupil-pupil dyad, the research design examines critical language commonalities and differences between primary and secondary settings and identifies potential barriers for progress. Identification of language systems will support the understanding of the level of language children have in Year 6, and their confidence in using this language in Year 7 to enable learning and enhance conceptual thinking, and to master ideas through exploration and enquiry. As a result, teachers will be better able to ensure sustainable progress if they first equip the children with the full breadth of language development needed pre- and post-transfer.

#### ***1. What factors benefit or detract from a child's learning at transition? In particular, do socio-cultural settings affect a child's development of independent learning?***

Studies on transition identify three areas for successful sustainable learning: enthusiasm for learning; children's confidence in themselves as learners; and a sense of achievement and purpose (Galton *et al* 1999a, Evans *et al*, 2010; Osborne *et al*, 2006; Measor and Woods, 1984). Yet, in this definition of sustainable learning, the socio-constructivist ideal that talk drives learning is missing (Bernstein, 1975; Vygotsky, 1986). Phases 2 and 3 of the research design detail observations of children in three distinct socio-cultural settings. These consist of teacher-led classrooms, and peer-led learning activities that provide rich data to understand how a child participates in a variety of microsystems in order to learn independently in Year 6. Repeated data collections using identical sources not only act as explicit tools for comparison, but also assess specific learning skills and strategies that children take with them during the transfer process.

In order to transfer successfully and operate in multiple microsystems, children need to develop confidence in their ability to learn. A child has to be curious, willing to take risks and to make mistakes. A confident child has resilience, and is very secure in basic skills in

literacy, numeracy and information technology. Therefore, using tools of observation, the research design explores how a child within each case develops leadership in their learning, no matter where they are in their education. Research illustrates that all children have very different transitions to make because the language of the school may be very different from the home (Muschamp and Bullock, 2007). Thus, different environments in which the child participates will have an immediate and lasting impact on their learning. Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of a child nested within a set of Russian dolls (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) forces the child to be studied within a theoretical paradigm of ecology, thus nesting a child in their natural environment. The research design clearly differentiates between a child's varied learning environments that school offers, as children can easily become trapped within such a rigid framework, relying solely on historical contexts to move successfully between systems. This concept can be viewed as translucent, as a child has the ability to select tools of learning to interact with, and transfer, between contexts. Observational analysis of Phases 2 and 3 will develop understanding of a child's ability to select and utilise tools across contexts to become a confident and sustainable independent learner.

## ***2. How do teachers provide effective skills and experiences to support and challenge a child at transition?***

The term 'language' encompasses a wide range of meanings including: verbal and non-verbal prompts; descriptive and narrative; enquiring and exploration; and group and individual reflection and conversation. The socio-cultural perspective is that 'humans are seen as creatures that have a unique capacity for communication, thinking and learning processes that are shaped by culture' (Watkins, 2003 p4). Therefore, education is seen as a dialogic process involving mutual participants, that is, the teacher and the child. The process is to equip the child with tools to learn and evaluate learning processes. Watkins (2003) defines learning as an influential conception: 'learning is being taught; learning is individual sense-making; and learning is building knowledge with others.' Yet, studies on socio-cultural perspectives on dialogue by Mercer and Littleton (2007) have only been carried out on children in Years 2, 5 and 8, thus omitting the key transition ages from primary to secondary years.

Middle years (ages 7 to 12) are classified as the decisive years, the discovery years in which a child's attitudes, discipline and individuality develop (Plowden, 1967). It is a time when a child develops both physically and emotionally, and gains independence of thought. As already stated, the preparation for this is a set of microsystems within a single unit of a classroom where a child will form a complex relationship with their main teacher that in

many ways resembles Piaget's concept of 'attachment' (Meltzoff and Moore, 1985; Sugarman, 1988; Super and Harkness, 1982). It is not an over-protectiveness of the primary approach (Gannon and Whalley, 1975), but utilises a relationship of trust to enhance learning. Observational analysis in Phases 2 and 3 compares and contrasts teachers' classroom practice between primary and secondary education models. It forces analysis of exosystems that have the potential to both challenge and detract from the consistent support offered during transition.

Each phase of the research design focuses on interactions between child and teacher, the 'novice' to the 'expert'. Classroom observations allowed me to probe into subcultures of the setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1976), thus determining the microsystems in which this dyad partnership operates. Teachers from each case were video-recorded and observed teaching literacy-based subjects. The focus of this observation is their use of syntax and scaffolding to ensure children respond accurately to questions asked. Through detailing teacher-child and child-child exchanges I could record the child's response and translation within a technical context (Edwards and Westgate, 1994).

### ***3. How does the language demand of the schools affect a child's transition? Is there a common language between teachers to support children at transition?***

Language demand on children between schools is dictated by curriculum coverage and continuity, learning opportunities and new initiatives enforced by policy. To understand how language demand can affect learning, data need to be collated from relevant stakeholders and their responses analysed to explain practice and pedagogy. Exosystems can force pressures on teachers and children, and, as a result can be detrimental to the development of transferable sustainable learning. For example, pressures faced by primary schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances, with issues surrounding League Tables and Statutory Assessment Tests can limit curriculum provision and diminish language development through continual test preparation and 'teaching to the test.' At transition it is expected that primary schools release confident and articulate learners who can transfer language, knowledge and learning strategies into Year 7. However, such pre-determined cultural barriers can prevent this. This research helps to clarify the cause and effect of barriers on a child's progress and develops a greater understanding for distinguishing the type of language children use as they transfer into Year 7, and its effects on learning. The preliminary study was devised as a tool to collate such data by interviewing all stakeholders associated with transition from each case.

During the process of transition the learner moves directly into a 'strange situation'. Here they are confronted by new regimes, and, with limited experience of interaction with others outside the old regime, the learner has instantly to seek membership, which needs to be sustainable and long-term (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger generalise, saying that 'newcomers quickly become old timers' (p154), which, for a proportion of children transferring into Year 7, has a significant impact on their transfer of language skills to support learning. In fact, Lave and Wenger suggest that all children are confident learners within a dyad, or teacher-child and child-peer learning relationship, and all should be able to function in a continually changing environment. Experience within schools would suggest otherwise; that is, the majority of students are not confident within such dyads and this affects their learning outcomes. However, research suggests that some children do struggle to form social identities within teacher and peer relationships. Therefore, these children need to develop confidence within the dyad microsystem and translate those specific taught skills into their triads, or whole-class experience. Forman and Cazden (1985, p200) state that Piaget's view has a greater focus on child-child interaction – rather than child-adult interaction – to support learning outcomes, and this has to be gained through social experience and experience within the physical setting. In the ecological framework that Bronfenbrenner offers, such microsystems need to be negotiated by the child and are implicit to successful transfer. This study has observed sample groups of children completing an independent learning activity negotiated between peers for a successful conclusion. It is important to understand how a child transfers communication and negotiates skills, taught within a tightly structured classroom routine, to a self-generated project of problem solving between peers. To understand the impact of language demands between settings, and language maturation of children, this activity was repeated early on in Year 7 to compare and contrast how environment impacts language, role and learning.

### **3.7 Summary of Chapter 3**

This chapter outlines the study's research design, identifying key concepts of the research design, drawing on theoretical approaches used to develop each case study and its analysis. Merging the bioecological and ecological frameworks produces a holistic approach to the understanding of transition and removes the study from existing transition research. Existing bodies of research are defined within the framework of processes (or structures), person, context and time, which influence the outer layers of the ecological model. The study focuses on the framework's inner layers by developing understanding of children as social participators in learning within their meso- and microsystems, and considers transition within the broader concepts of each case study's model within the

bioecological framework and minutiae of learning sub-cultures. How the process and person infiltrate the ecological framework, and the relationship between context and time influencing ecological systems are discussed.

- *Qualitative research* supports the ideals of grounded theory, giving children a voice to express their experiences and participation within social and learning situations associated with transition.
- *Attribution theory* provides a further framework for understanding the 'why' of transition, significantly informing the research process by transforming perception of key themes into realities of behaviours, affects and expectancy of the children's transition period.
- *Case study* research suggests passages of discovery (Merriam, 1988) by offering an in-depth exploration of specific instances (Cohen *et al*, 2000), and allows the study of varying social groups by defining experience and expectation of everyday life. Within the study, each case offers a unique experience of transition, of which each child has a unique expectation.
- *Grounded theory* is a tool to reinforce children's experience within each model of transfer that offers no preconceptions that may influence findings, but provides a coherent structure to inform each phase of the research.

The final section revisits the research questions by placing them into context in the research design. It identifies learning relationships between the child, teacher and peer, and introduces consideration of potential changes to these relationships by relating perceived experience to the reality of change transition offers.

## Chapter 4

### Methods for data collection

*'Everyday life is so familiar that it may be invisible'*

Merriam, 1988b (p165)

#### 4.1 Introduction

In order for the research design to focus on the child, it is essential that the way children talk be emphasised through the tools for data collection (Lucey and Reay, 2000). The research design considered understanding transition within the wider contexts of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) and then focused on children's adaptations to changing learning meso- and microsystems. Therefore, this study required tools that would complement and enhance the merger of frameworks conceptualised in Figure 3.3 (Chapter 3).

Data collection was divided into three phases. Phase 1 formed the 'preliminary investigation', in which views from stakeholders were collected and initial issues considered with regard to understanding and evaluating the impact of each case's transition model on a child's sustainable learning. Phase 2 identified the 'attribution' and 'consequence' of children participating in and reacting to their approach to transfer, with methods that situated children in the different learning environments school offers. In Phase 3 children were observed in the contexts of their secondary school. This chapter describes the methods used for data collection in this endeavour to gain further understanding of the changing contexts of children's transition. My focus was to study children in the 'natural' formal and 'informal' learning environment school offers.

#### 4.2 Rationale for methods

Edwards and Westgate's (1994) framework on the collation of field data and language analysis is central to this form of investigation. They questioned the validity and transparency of meaning that language carries; the critical indicators that reveal the reality of talk within a particular setting; and further evidence to supplement talk. My research was centred between the chronological events associated with pre- and post-transfer, and the design employed developed the understanding of microsystems and learning cultures within the classroom. Methods I used included:



- interviews with stakeholders
- student voice activities (used throughout the study).
- observations of informal group learning activities (Phases 2 and 3).
- lesson observations in Year 6 and 7 classrooms (Phase 2 and 3).

#### **4.2.1 Interviews**

In order for me to gain insight into and understanding of each transition model, I needed to collate data from a range of stakeholders associated with each school. The purpose of Phase 1's research was to benchmark the point that each school had reached in terms of its transition model, and to gain views from the sample group of children about how they thought they fitted into existing transition frameworks. An initial decision concerned whether to collect data through questionnaires, or to use interviews to gain reaction and evaluation of each model. For the purposes of this study, I felt that questionnaires would limit responses and direct stakeholder opinions, whereas Scott (2008) defines interviews as 'thinking aloud', that is, giving participants' choice and agency. Therefore, I decided to use interviews and student voice activities to collect views about current experience and allow a voice for future aspiration.

What people say they do and what they actually do may be two entirely different things (Bryman, 2001). Semi-structured interviews are not associated with causal relationships (Denscombe, 2008), but offer a flexibility for maximising data collection to differentiate between reality and impression. Stakeholders representing each case were interviewed to provide contextual understanding of transition and to triangulate the student voice activities. The interviews in Phase 1 covered the same agenda of issues for teaching staff. Semi-structured interviews had an initial structure of questions (Appendix 2) that needed to be covered in order to gain consistency between cases. However, this interview process required flexibility for interviewees to be given opportunities to extend responses and speak openly about their understanding and evaluation of their school's transition model. All stakeholders interviewed had an immediate connection with the transition model through being a Year 6 teacher, Head of Year, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team with specific responsibility for transition. Initially, I prescribed a time limit of half-an-hour per interview, but, on reflection, considered that this allocation of time would be restrictive for some. Therefore, I offered no time limit, and this increased flexibility and discussion. Table 4.1 outlines specific details of participants, location, and time of stakeholder interviews.

Initially, I wanted to formalise the interview process by restricting each interview to exact questions, but I had to find ways to give participants the opportunity to talk and express views openly. The notion of openness became imperative for me in order to begin evaluating the transition models. I had to plan how to negotiate myself into established relationships, and develop open questions that were non-threatening and would promote active dialogue. Bruner (1986) considers that the process of learning how to negotiate communicatively is the very process by which one enters a culture. Each stakeholder interview was audio-recorded. For some, this caused a level of initial obtrusion, as teachers were conscious of the recorder. To overcome this, I began each interview outlining the nature of the study and the potential importance it had to the school. This allowed participants to be actively involved in the evaluative nature of the research. I also expressed the importance of confidentiality and representation in the final thesis. Finally, I gave each participant the opportunity to decline the interview at any point. This seemed to ease the start of each interview giving participants' greater control of the actual process.

#### **4.2.2 Student voice activities**

Language, or talk, is the basis on which to understand and explore social interaction in order to determine social reality (Punch, 2009 and 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that knowledge is constructed between participants through various exchanges contained within microcosms of social settings. Hence, children's talk and participation formed a central theme to this research design. The size and organisation of a school has the potential to depersonalise education, and it is essential to build new partnerships in sustainable learning across transition phases, thus creating a 'radical collegiate' between child and teacher (Fielding, 1999). By developing activities that promote the student voice along with semi-structured interviews with other relevant stakeholders, the research design embraced a sustainable partnership between the key participants in each case.

Listening to the student voice has the potential to transform our learning culture (Rudduck, 2009). Developing conversations between children and professionals based on teaching and learning, evaluation of school practice, and seeking advice from pupils to solve institutional issues is an exciting prospect, bridging partnerships within a cultural and social setting. In effect, student voice authenticates communication and enhances the relationship between teacher and child. Fielding and Rudduck (2002) state that student voice opportunities help to build a more inclusive community and develop a consultative means for pupil participation. However, some professionals fear what children might have to say about their practice and organisational structures, because what is stated is perceived as

reality by the child, and is based on their knowledge and experience of the setting. My professional experience with student voice activities has shown that children are extremely observant, and each has an openness that brings a unique and intriguing degree of truth to statements they make about situations. Yet there are many silent voices within a school community (Fielding and Rudduck, 2002), and then it is not a case of what is said, but who is heard. Within their article, Fielding and Rudduck suggest that some researchers believe student voice to be a passing fashion. However, student voice is now a pivotal tool in school improvement and school self-evaluation.

Working reflexively, it was important to consider limitations of student voice. Scott (2008) suggests that transition research prefers to collate views of teachers and parents, rather than children themselves. Christensen and James (2008) identify methodological issues with asking children to talk about time, time passing, looking forward, predicting and then reversing time, as temporal concepts. For some researchers, there is an implicit assumption that children will engage proactively in all research activities. In addition, Scott (2008) suggests that children can only answer questions that are pertinent and relevant to their current situation. Therefore, they have the ability to control responses and minimise data collection, which reduces the reliability and validity of data collected in this manner. The reality is that when interviewing, it is essential to differentiate questions, as all children have achieved different language abilities, including understanding of concepts, literacy levels, and stages of cognitive development.

This research design included three case studies investigated within Phases 1 and 2; one of these dropped out after Phase 2, so only two were investigated a third time in Phase 3. Each case study had a series of student voice activities with groups of children pre- and post-transfer, that is, within Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the research. These provided data about the experience of transition, and the feelings around the process through which each participant was navigating. Group interview situations pose concerns about dynamics, culture and interaction. I was entering a domain where the participants had worked together for a number of years. As a researcher, I intruded into their situation and needed to assess group dynamics in order to maximise data collection (Cohen *et al*, 2009). Each student voice activity was planned with a starter activity to engage the children, for example, a worksheet (Appendix 5) that was used to initiate discussion. Questions were used as prompts for children to gain confidence within the situation, and for me to identify active participants.

## Professional Stakeholder Interviews

	Interview participants	Location of interview	Length of interview	Recording of data Audio / Video
<b>Case 1</b>	Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher	Headteacher's office	50 min	Audio
	Two Year 6 teachers	Year 6 classroom	40 min	Audio
<b>Case 2</b>	Principal and Vice Principal	Principal's office	55 min	Audio
	Assistant Principal (Transition)	Meeting room	35 min	Audio
	Year 6 teacher	Meeting room	20 min	Audio
	Year 6 teacher	Meeting room	16 min	Audio
<b>Case 3</b>	Head of Year 6	Meeting room	45 min	Audio
	Year 6 teacher	Year 6 classroom	27 min	Audio

**Table 4.1: Stakeholder interview generic information**

Using my teaching experience to assess passive participators and innate leaders, I targeted initial questions to certain participants in order to generate discourse amongst the sample groups. Children gave an authentic account of their experiences, apprehensions and excitement, as well as exploring expectations of provision. Each student voice activity had a series of questions relating to their experience to date, and these are discussed later within this chapter.

Each student voice involved the same stratified random sample of children in each case. There were some alterations as each case study developed. For example, one child in Case 2 transferred to a different secondary school. There were no time limits for the student voice activities as it was important not to rush the children and to allow them time to explore questions asked. The student voice was further supported as no other adults were present. As a result, children did not feel the need to restrict the information they gave. Each student voice was video-recorded. This eased later transcription by ensuring precision of statements and identification of what each child had said. There was little evidence to suggest that the video was obtrusive: after initial discussion about the purpose of the research and their roles within it, the children ignored the video camera. This was supported during the transcription phase as the children were seen talking to me and each other, not to the video camera. Table 4.2 outlines specific details of each student voice activities.

#### **4.2.3 Achieving the benchmark**

These interviews formed the starting point of a set of chronological events associated with transfer (Figure 4.1a). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed an initial benchmark of behaviours and characteristics of all participants at the start of Year 6 within the three case studies. Questions based on Evangelou *et al's* (2008) study evaluating successful transition from primary to secondary school provided an effective framework for discussion. As with student voice, some stakeholder interviews began with a certain apprehension concerning feelings of intrusiveness in each setting. As each interview developed, participants became more articulate and less inhibited to voice fact and opinion of transition structures.

Figure 4.1b conceptualises how each tool for data collection was used to respond to each research question posed. It should be noted that tools were used across questions in order to ensure validity and trustworthiness of data collected. Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguished between these terms, validity and trustworthiness, and debated how both are

ensured in qualitative research. They suggested that for data to be trustworthy information gathering activities need to be sustained all processes should receive external checks; hypotheses, or ideas, need to be refined; continual checks need to be made against preliminary findings; and a direct test of findings and interpretation should be made. This contributes to understanding the weight of the term 'validity', that is, when data are reliable, or repeatable, are generated by objective responses to the research questions and followed by the dovetailing of tools to obtain richer interpretation and response from individual participants. Figure 3.3 (Chapter 3) visualised how children form the central thread of the study, allowing detailed analysis of their views and understanding of the transition process.

#### **4.2.4 Independent learning observation**

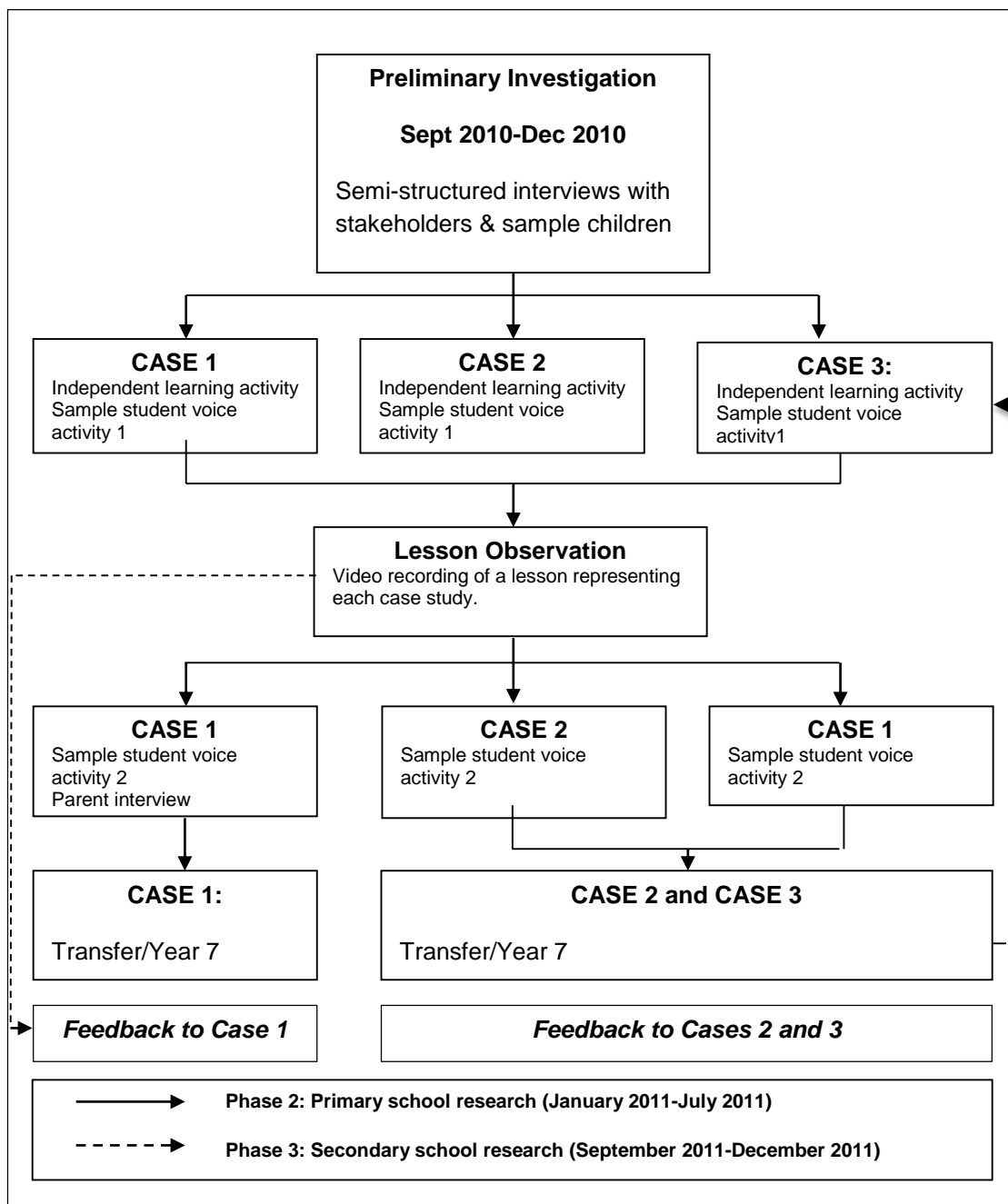
The initial interviews offered a wealth of data about each case. It became evident that to understand each transition model I would need to move beyond the macrosystem of collating data from stakeholders, and begin to understand how the sample groups and their peers operated in their microsystems of the classroom learning experience. Phases 2 and 3 had the potential to collate a wealth of data from a variety of activities. However, as the interviews progressed common themes emerged of consistency of language and learning between primary and secondary school classrooms.

Learning can occur in all aspects of school life; this includes the classroom, playground, and dining hall. For validity of interview data, it was necessary for me to understand how children transfer their learning between classroom settings. Therefore, to increase understanding of this transfer I devised a schedule of classroom observations of both children leading learning in child-led activities, and teachers leading learning. The qualitative nature of this research draws on experience, expectation and participation within each scenario. Two observational scenarios provided detailed data for each case: these were, (i) a sociologically-constructed observation of a child-led independent learning activity; and, (ii) a formal dramaturgical observation of a structured classroom lesson (Adler and Adler, 1994; Bryman, 2001). The purpose of observation was to capture the reality of each context that affects perceived understanding and to consider the children's appreciation of reality in situations presented within the research design. This achieved a deep understanding of context and data, and also allowed comparisons ways in which we gain knowledge, and value participants' interpretation of their reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Joniak, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) question how social experience is created and given meaning.

## Student Voice

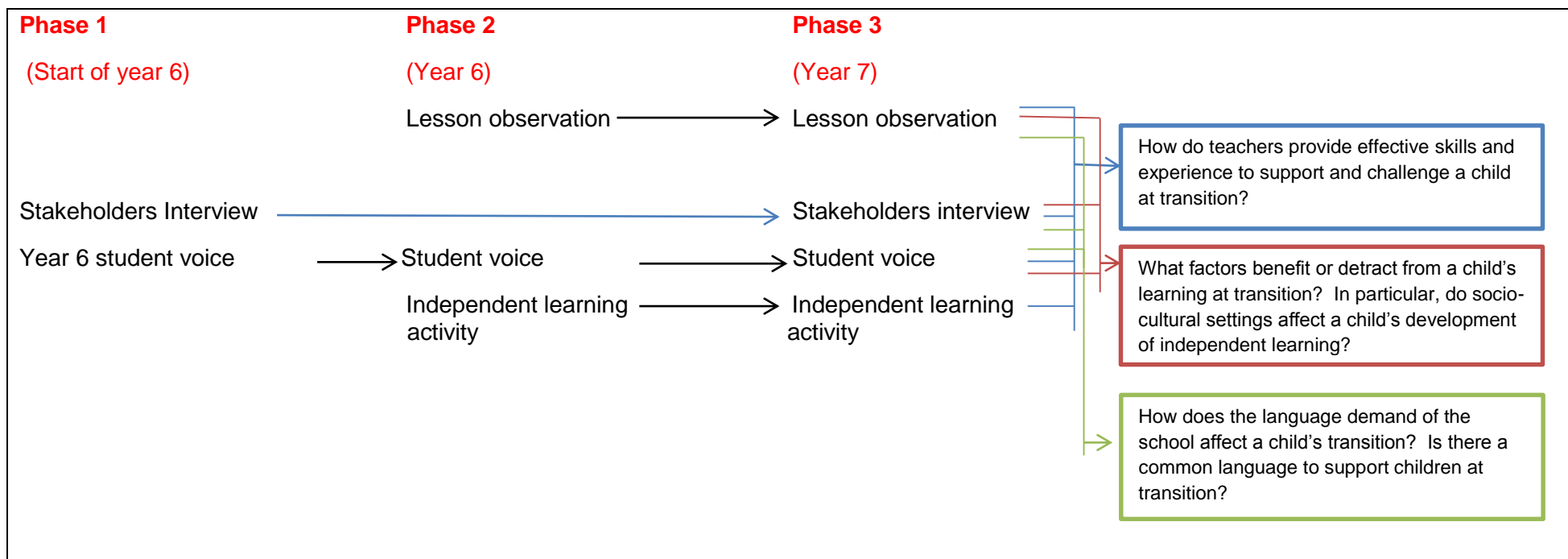
	Interview Participants		Location of interview	Additional adult present	Length of Interview	Recording of data Audio / Video
	Male	Female				
Case 1						
Phase 1	2	3	School library	No	52 min 9 s	Video
Phase 2	2	3	Year 6 resources room	No	27 min 20 s	Video
Phase 3	1	4	Year 6 school hall	No	24 min 43 s	Video
Case 2						
Phase 1	2	5	Meeting room	No	30 min 59 s	Video
Phase 2	2	5	Year 6 resources room	No	25 min 50 s	Video
Phase 3	2	4	Year 7 classroom	No	24 min 53 s	Video
Case 3						
Phase 1	3	3	Meeting room	No	36 min 54 s	Video
Phase 2	3	3	Meeting room	No	20 min 45 s	Video
Phase 3	2	1	Year 7 classroom	No	16 min 20 s	Video

**Table 4.2: Student voice generic information**



**Figure 4.1a:** Data collection framework





**Figure 4.1b:** Linking research methods to study questions

To triangulate the theoretical model proposed by Bronfenbrenner, I investigated peer relationships. This measured how a child could transfer and translate technical language from the 'expert-novice' relationship into a peer dyad. Each sample group completed an independent learning activity without intervention from a teacher or researcher. The activities I designed were the creation of a 'raft' in Year 6, and a 'tower' in Year 7, both made from craft materials. The rationale for the two different models was to observe whether the children could transfer skills demonstrated in Year 6 into a new environment and prototype in Year 7. I used techniques of sociologically-constructed observation, in which behaviours and speech are broken down into minute details, to develop the coding system. This system was based on Mercer and Wegerif's (2004) concept of exploratory talk, or oral reasoning, which is detailed in Chapters 5 and 6 (Adler and Adler, 1994; Bryman, 2001). After the activities, a student voice interview enabled the sample children to reflect on, and evaluate, their task. These activities were conducted during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the investigation.

#### **4.2.5 Classroom observation**

In contrast, classroom observations were designed to observe learning interactions between child and teacher, the 'novice' to the 'expert', and between groups of children. Observations allowed a detailed analysis of subcultures of the setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1976), thus determining how each microsystem operates within the dyad partnership. In contrast to the independent learning activities, dramaturgical observations allowed for larger patterns of behaviour to be recorded (Adler and Adler, 1994). Data evolved from a series of lesson activities, rather than a single source documented by the independent learning activity. Lesson observations included teachers from all three settings teaching literacy and numeracy. My focus was their use of syntax and scaffolding to ensure that children responded accurately to questions asked. By detailing teacher-child and child-child exchange, it was possible to record the child's response and translation within a technical context (Edwards and Westgate, 1994). In order to compare whether, and how, behaviours and language had changed during transfer, this activity was repeated with Year 7 teachers of drama and mathematics. Table 4.3 provides generic data concerning the informal learning and lesson observation.

The specific focus in the lesson for each case was speaking and listening. This focus was not solely for literacy-based subjects, as speaking and listening are developed across all curriculum areas. The structure I agreed with each teacher was:

## Independent and classroom observations

	Interview Participants		Location of interview	Additional adult present	Length of Interview	Recording of data Audio/Video
	Male	Female				
Case 1						
Phase 2 Raft activity	2	3	Year 6 resources room	No	27 min 20 s	Video
Lesson	9	13	Year 6 classroom	Yes (Teacher, 1 TA)	24 min 43 s	Video
Phase 3 Tower activity	1	4	School hall	No		Video
Case 2						
Phase 2 Raft activity	2	5	Year 6 resources room	No	30 min 59 s	Video
Lesson	8	15	Year 6 classroom	Yes (Teacher, 1 TA)	25 min 50 s	Video
Phase 3 Tower activity	2	4	Year 7 classroom	No	24 min 53 s	Video
Lesson (Drama)	12	14	Drama Studio	No		
Lesson (Maths)	9	7	Maths room	Yes (Teacher, 2 TAs)		
Case 3						
Phase 2 Raft activity	3	3	Meeting room	No	36 min 54 s	Video
Lesson	14	9	Year 6 classroom	Yes (1 Teacher, 2 TAs)	20 min 45 s	Video
Phase 3 Tower activity (Lessons as Case 2)	2	1	Year 7 classroom	No	16 min 20 s	Video

(TA: Teaching Assistant)

**Table 4.3 Independent and classroom observation details**

- **Starter:** teacher led discussion on an initial problem.
- **Middle:** students worked in small groups in solving the problem.
- **Plenary:** groups shared their findings with the class.

Table 4.4 outlines teachers' interpretations of the requirements. As expected, I observed lessons across curriculum areas. Due to the setting arrangements in Year 7, I observed two lessons, as a proportion of the sample children from Cases 2 and 3 were in each. A lesson could not be observed in Case 1 in Year 7 as the secondary school was unable to accommodate this part of the research.

		Year 6 (Phase 2)	Year 7 (Phase 3)
Case 1	Numeracy	<b>Problem:</b> to write a business plan to launch a product they were creating. Each had to be 'sold' to the class.	
Case 2	Literacy	<b>Problem:</b> to re-invent a fairy tale using the same characters in a modern setting. Each had to be read to the class.	Drama <b>Problem:</b> to develop a three-part story and share it with the class.
Case 3	Art	<b>Problem:</b> to present photographs in a visual presentation	Mathematics <b>Problem:</b> to identify different strategies to solve fractions. Each had to be shared with the class.

**Table 4.4:** Focus of each lesson observed

Developing cultural understanding of the context by collecting data from real life situations (Denscombe, 2008; Edwards and Westgate, 1994) provided understanding of the mesosystem and macrosystem for each case. Examination of the mesosystem of how, why and where the child operates defines microsystems to which the developing child has responded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Observation notes and transcripts from classroom and independent learning activities led to a comparison of roles in structured and unstructured activities. These observations were supported by student voice activities in each phase.

#### 4.2.6 Recording, reporting and storage of data

All data collections from observations and interviews were either audio- or video-recorded. Teacher interviews were audio-recorded using a dictaphone, which contributed to a relaxed, informal setting. Each recording was transcribed and distributed to interviewees to check for accuracy and any misrepresentations. There were no issues of misrepresentation or inaccuracies. Each transcript was approved prior to depersonalising and coding. The content of all interviews was understood to be confidential between the participants and myself, and this was reiterated in each phase. For ease of transcription, student voice interviews were video-recorded, so that each child's contribution could be distinguished, and, thereafter, I followed the same process as for staff interviews, and finally, sent anonymised student voice interview transcripts to each school for their records.

Lesson observations and independent learning activities were video-recorded, and observation notes taken on a self-designed lesson observation sheet (Figure 4.2). Lessons were transcribed, with final recordings copied and sent to the class teacher to be used as part of their professional development. The video camera was disguised and had little effect on clarity of answers or children's confidence when answering.

Heath *et al* (2010) suggest three ways in which video cameras can capture action. Firstly cameras are strategically located to find action within each socio-physical setting. Secondly, cameras need to be placed at key points so as not to miss, or misinterpret, action. Thirdly, in order not to lose detail, cameras need to frame the action so that activities can be broken down later. Prior to filming, I visited each classroom with the teacher in order to position the camera effectively. During the initial observation teachers and children looked directly at the video as they spoke, but within five minutes of the start of the lesson, all participants had settled and did not react to the camera. This meant that there was no disruption to the quality of data it collected, as the children operated normally within their natural setting

Audio- and video-recording share methodological issues in terms of validity and reliability of responses. Knoblauch *et al* (2008) argued that visual data collection is becoming more widespread in the Social Sciences. However, it also questions perceived and actual reality. Validity of perception requires further investigation and triangulation. Jewett (2012) concurs that the use of video is more widespread, and argues that it is a naturally-occurring data collection tool. He identifies five categories of video-data collection:

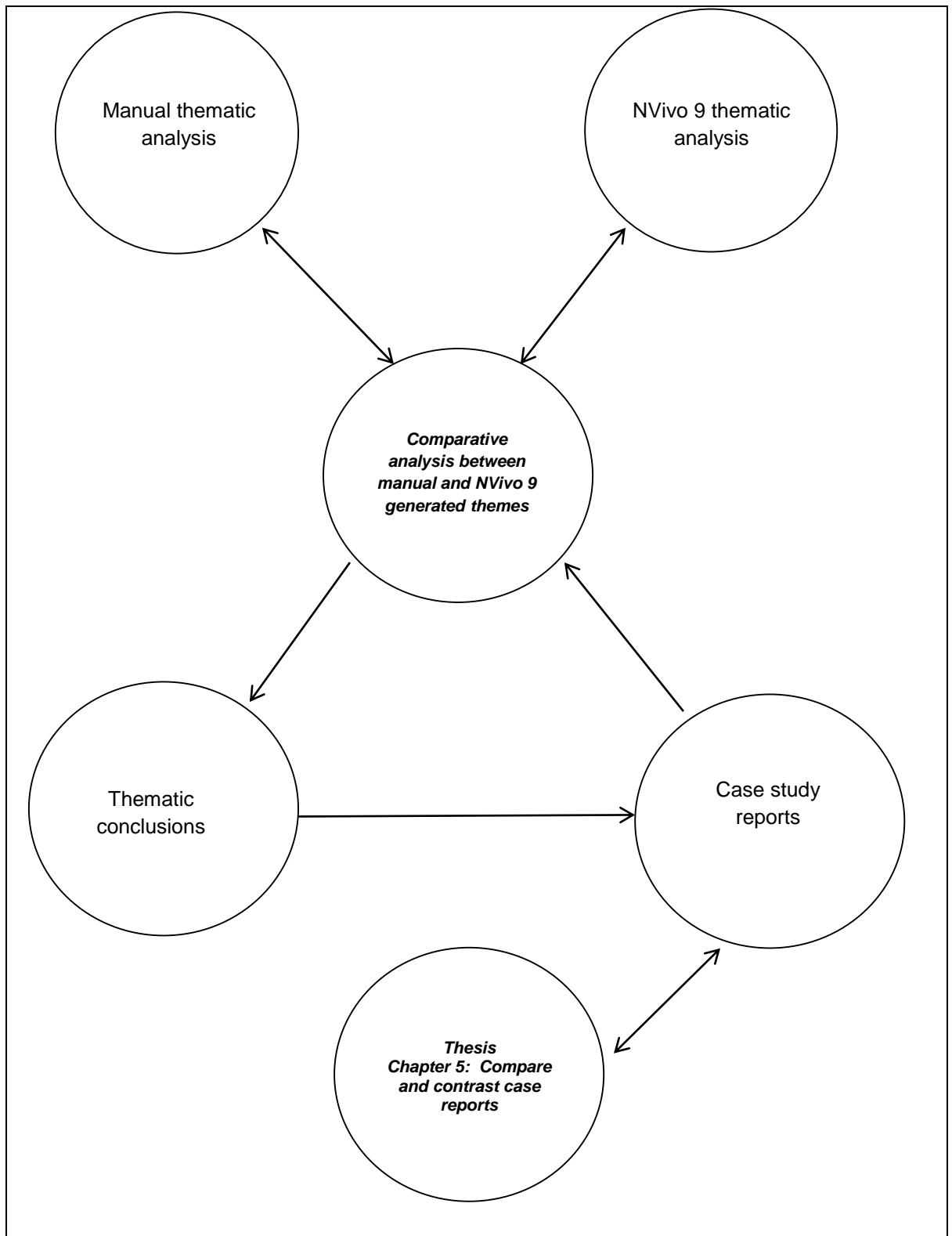
1. A participatory resource documenting aspects of life.
2. Videography in making of films.
3. Use of existing videos, for example, CCTV and YouTube.
4. Video elicitation to be used for the recall of facts and validation of data recorded.
5. Video-based fieldwork to record chronology of events and their analysis.

The initial use of video for this study was to identify participants as they spoke in interviews. This proved effective in terms of transcribing the interviews and eliciting details of responses during each phase of the student voice. The use of video in observation activities ensured that the lesson was represented and validated in terms of the final transcript and its analysis. Pee and Hoffert (2009) challenge the perceived reality of video, raising the possibility of children – and their teachers – playing for the video rather than allowing it to record natural chronological events. However, as mentioned above, this was not a problem. It is interesting to note, that throughout the independent learning activities, children did not speak to the camera. Furthermore, video-recordings augmented data by capturing the children's reaction to their socio-physical setting, and so developed as another tool for analysis as the research progressed (Heath *et al*, 2010), and increased collection of first person data.

#### **4.2.7 Generation of themes**

I compiled detailed transcripts from the audio- and video-recordings, and developed various stages of analysis using combinations of manual and NVivo 9 data analysis tools. Figure 4.2 identifies the relationship between each strand used. Use of NVivo 9 ensured that initial analysis from self-generated coding and themes was accurate and validated. NVivo 9 supported a structure for analysis of the data collated. Figure 4.1 conceptualises the five steps from development of strategies, to understanding the data from its reporting and analysis.

- The first step consists of identification of recurrences of initial codes that emerged from the data. Initial graphical analysis of the recurrence of key language tools and initial themes generated from each phase are included in Appendix 3.
- The second step is the highlighting of similarities and differences in learning activities between Phases 2 and 3. Initial conclusions from the activities were based solely on observations and did not refer to thematic strands. Details of this analysis are provided in Appendix 4.



**Figure 4.2:** Generation of transition themes

- The third step involved revisiting each transcript to identify key themes and sub-themes. Comparison of manual and NVivo 9 findings ensured the analysis was accurate and consistent.

- In the fourth step these three stages fed into case study reports. These considered the analysis for each case and highlighted key issues of their transition programme.
- The fifth and final step involved comparison and contrasting of the case study reports considering comparative key issues of transition (documented in Chapter 5).

### **4.3 Implementation of methods**

Deciding on methods to use for the study's research design identified many issues regarding validity and reliability. These included the collection of relevant data in an evolving case study; the amount of potential data that could be collated; and ensuring that data received accurate analysis and interpretation. Implementation of methods was crucial for understanding different perspectives on transition, so to assist with reflection on the impact and reliability of methods, I kept a research journal throughout the study. This allowed reflection and recording of initial thoughts on each case, and presented further questions about interpretation and analysis of data; throughout the implementation period more questions seemed to be raised than answered. Nonetheless, the journal supported the consolidation of my thought processes, ensured that questions I asked began to be answered. This section documents my reflections and implementation of methods for each phase.

#### **4.3.1 Phase 1, the preliminary investigation**

In order to develop a broad understanding of the contexts of each case study, Phase 1 was designed to collate case-specific data. Demographic analysis, attainment data and review documentation including recent Ofsted reports were used to construct initial contexts. In addition, the sample children's progress and attainment data were tracked and analysed at the end of Year 6 and the start of Year 7. This characterised their progress throughout the transition period and created a further tool to evaluate consistency between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers in their uses of assessment, and language. Demographic statistics developed a broad picture summarising how trends within employment and deprivation in all three cases correlate to a child's attainment and confidence in their learning. Demography contributes to each school's data set measuring attainment and achievement.



Questions for semi-structured interviews and student voice activities were designed to collate information on respondents' interpretation of processes, procedures and outcomes for each case transfer programme – in effect an evaluative tool based on Evangelou *et al*'s study (2008) (Appendix 2). The use of semi-structured interviews provided a framework for debate without being fixed to a set, unmoveable agenda. I anticipated results similar to Galton's ORACLE study of 1975 and 1990s in which children needed to make three distinct areas of adjustment, that is, social, institutional and curricular. Initial questions were structured around these three categories, identifying process and procedures to ensure social stability for the child; partnership between primary and secondary school clusters; and continuity of pedagogy, curricula and assessment. Identical questions for each stakeholder produced perceived realities of each case's transition programme, thus triangulating and validating each process.

I structured the student voice activities in a similar way to the stakeholder interviews. Again questions were generated to understand and test findings of ORACLE and other studies. Introductory questions were designed to collate data to provide understanding of children's perceptions of learning in Year 6 prior to questions covering social, institutional and curriculum issues. Children were extremely articulate about the provision received in Year 6, and this fed into expectations for Year 7. Starter activities were prepared for each group and involved mind mapping of expectation for Year 7 and a worksheet designed for 'On the bus' and 'My school bag' (Appendix 5) This provided a stimulus for the group interviews.

#### **4.3.2 Themes and coding**

Simple initial coding, using principles of grounded theory, generated key themes contained within the transcripts (Glazer and Strauss, 1967). The initial analysis of the transcripts identified three distinct broad themes that were not far removed from the previous research. Each theme identified process and procedural devices contained within a child's emotional development and well-being; child support mechanisms to aid transfer; and transfer of curriculum knowledge and understanding. Once themes had been identified, sub-themes began to be categorised, and led to interpretation and generation of theory, and understanding. However, each theme had a notable difference in interpretation from that concluded from previous studies, because every interview had a greater emphasis, allied to ecological principles of transition, on understanding how the child reacts and adapts to a different learning environment. Therefore, each transcript received two further successive coding systems. Firstly to identify reactions to transition including: child-centred activities;

support for parents and children; myth; and school cluster partnerships. Secondly, codes identified perceptions of adapting to a new learning environment. Sub-themes here included: familiarity with the transfer school; transfer of child; post-transfer evaluation and issues; and continuity of provision and language demands. Underpinning sub-themes from this coding cycle were the impact of SATs. These were then categorised into further subthemes. Subthemes were generated through the transcripts, rather than by my own pre-conceived ideology.

Similar coding themes were generated from teacher interviews and student voice. Initial analysis centred on the recurrence of themes and how they impact impressions of process and procedures for transition. This analysis is developed in Chapter 5. These findings fed into Phases 2 and 3 of the research design through student voice interviews and fieldwork data collections with teachers. Coding identified three emerging themes from the initial framework of interviews.

**Theme 1:** Process and procedures of transition impacting on a child's emotional development.

- Child-centred activities and statements.
- School support for the child.
- School support for the family.
- Familiarity with the transfer school.
- Myth.

**Theme 2:** Support and understanding of transition process.

- Partnerships with the transfer school.
- Processes and procedures for the transfer.
- Data and information transferred.
- Post-transfer phase.

**Theme 3:** Impact of transition on a child's school career.

- Commonalities of language for learning between primary and secondary.
- Continuity of provision.
- Purpose and recording of SATs at transfer.

#### **4.3.3 Issues arising from Phase 1, the preliminary investigation**

Case study design is not normally interested in testing hypotheses. However, hypotheses could be derived from the multiple sources of evidence offered by Phase 1 (Merriam, 1988a). Phase 1 provided a foundation for construction and reflection on a more focused research design for Phase 2 of the study. In essence, Phase 1's design redefined the definition of transfer and transition, and, therefore, refocused the initial research design for Phases 2 and 3 (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). Analysis of preliminary data highlighted a variety of potential issues that were a distinct departure from the work of Measor and Woods (1984), Galton *et al* (1999b), and Osborn *et al* (2006). Research has to be closely defined to make an immediate and lasting impact on children's learning. It needs to move away from broader contexts of myth, by building and processes, refining contexts, and specifying what we understand by the term 'confident and articulate learners'. Using inductive reasoning (Merriam, 1988a), the preliminary investigation built evidence to develop the constructs. It was essential that Phases 2 and 3 should begin to understand transition through the eyes of a child. For many of the representative sample this process had started informally, prior to preparations by their schools. Three hypotheses developed from this initial investigation:

1. Potential dips in attainment are caused by a child's inability to de-contextualise information and knowledge, and transfer this into the variety of contexts secondary schools offer.
2. SATs diminish development of transferable skills due to the pressures faced by stakeholders and primary schools in delivering results shared within a public domain. In effect, children need to be deskilled in other curriculum areas to get through the test.
3. Inconsistencies of subject-specific language between primary and secondary schools place unnecessary demands on a child's development into a sustainable and confident learner.

To conclude, transition requires a deeper understanding of the contexts and systems in which children are required to participate. Phases 2 and 3 required tools to define the contexts of each model further within the processes Bronfenbrenner offers in his bioecological framework.

## 4.4 Phase 2 of data collection

I used issues generated from Phase 1 to construct techniques suitable for rich data collection, and employed three distinct methods of collecting data in Phase 2, namely: independent learning activity, classroom observation, and student voice interviews. Each centred on the way children talk in different settings within the context of school. Activities identified children as active participants within different contexts of their setting. Phase 2 was not designed to test a theory or hypothesis, but to build explanations of language demands using accurate renditions of results (Yin, 1981). Phase 2 tracked the development of the children and took place within the final seven months of the children's Year 6 as they transferred into Year 7. Previous investigations have viewed this as a dormant time transition-wise, where the curriculum is heavily saturated with preparation for SATs, followed immediately by limited transfer work towards the end of the academic year.

### 4.4.1 Independent learning activity – the 'raft'

The purpose of the independent learning activity was to collect conversational and exploratory talk data as each sample group completed a task, in this case, the construction of a raft that could float, using a range of craft materials. Each group was given 30 minutes to create and test the prototype. The learning objective for the task involved developing group skills to solve a problem creatively. The children completed the task away from the classroom environment in a resource room. The video-recording of the activity identified non-linguistic features including gesture and informal acknowledgements of activities. Basic instructions were given to the groups, but there was very little interaction between the researcher and children during the activity.

Initial coding used concepts of 'exploratory talk' developed by Mercer and Wegerif's (2004). This was a text-based analysis that assesses the relative occurrence of language associated with exploration, or reasoning. The coding system develops linguistic features analysing how children move a task forward and sustain the task with limited teacher intervention. The original coding system (shown below) was developed from a child's ability to explore and reason orally within the context of a learning task. In addition to this, I have included 'yes' and 'no' as additional codes and definitions.

- **Question:** questions asked related to the exercise.
- **Because/'cos:** giving reasons for decisions made.

- **So:** further clarification of decisions and questioning decisions made.
- **If:** seeking alternatives whilst creating the product.
- **Yes/Yeah:** to move the task forward.
- **No:** to prevent an action or to stop the progress of the task.

Analysis of the transcripts generated a further three themes that allowed a more focused coding system to emerge, and, eventually, a more in-depth analysis to be produced. Each theme contributed to moving the task forward through a variety of dialogic structures. Thus, a tool was formed to understand the different demands of language skills faced by each child, and to consider how they reacted to these demands through development of the roles that the task offered. To summarise, coding mechanisms provided structures detailing how children reacted to and immersed themselves as participators within an identified learning context. Themes that arose included analysis of questions; maintenance of interest in the task; and instructions given to complete the task. Subsequently, sub-themes were developed from each category.

**Theme 1: Question analysis:** developed from the type of questions asked by the children during the task, which included:

- **seeking clarification** from each other about a particular point of the task.
- **task oriented** questions to move the task forward.
- questions used to **present ideas** to ensure contribution towards the final product.

**Theme 2: Interest maintained in the task**

- **Positive comments** made throughout the task.
- **Negative comments** made throughout the task.

**Theme 3: Instructions given to complete the task**

- **Task progression** instructions: to ensure the task is completed to the best of the children's ability, and to add pace to the activity.
- **Requests to pass materials:** appropriate materials requested to complete the task.
- **Requesting help:** children instruct each other to hold items down and share ideas.
- **Giving help:** offering advice to ensure task completion.

#### **4.4.2 Classroom observation**

I observed literacy- and numeracy-based lessons in order to understand how child and teacher behaviours changed within the more formal setting of a highly structured classroom environment. Observation notes recorded style of questioning developed by the teacher, classroom routines and developed a 'classroom travel plan' highlighting focused support that the teacher gave to each group. Figure 4.3 is an anonymised lesson observation form that I designed to record details of lesson synopsis and possible pedagogies that were transferrable into Year 7. Transcripts of lessons were divided into teacher; gender; and sample statements with initial coding detailing formal and informal learning conversations that lead to more focused methods and highlighted similar themes to those of the independent learning activity.

The initial concept of this design was to capture data-defining mesosystems of school life by embracing the classroom as a single entity. However, focusing on the lesson, rather than working within it, allowed field notes to be compared and contrasted against the recorded lesson, which produced rich data about classroom microsystems that contribute to effective teaching and learning strategies portrayed by both teacher and learner. In addition to systems identifying exploratory talk, the recording and transcript developed episodes of defining conversation, together with innate and taught behaviours and scaffolding of instructional activity to ensure challenge to learning, and development of independent skills. Thus, the design offered cohesion to the different activities to be analysed within Bronfenbrenner's bioecological and ecological frameworks, identifying each interactive system in which the child operates, as illustrated in Figure 3.2 (Chapter 3).

#### **4.4.3 Student voice interviews**

Themes were identified in, and developed from the student voice interviews conducted in Phase 1 (the preliminary study). Activities for Phase 2 developed child responses to the three hypothetical statements concerning contexts of transition. Interviews held at the end of the sample children's Year 6 were structured by the children reflecting on their Year 6 provision and looking forward to preparations for Year 7. This structure created a natural comparison to responses made in Phase 1 and identified features that, in the children's opinion, affected, or enhanced, their progress. The children's attainment in Year 6 was used for further reflection before the final interview, which took place midway through the first term of Year 7. However, the interviews were not used to test theories or

hypotheses, but to add clarification to responses in the initial student voice interviews. To summarise, the interviews established the cause and effect of contextual boundaries in Year 6 that continually redefine transition and its construct (Yin, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989).

The student voice identified themes associated with their experience of Year 6. These included reflections on Year 6; SATs; expectations of Year 7; and the transition programme to the point of interview. Each theme identified positive and negative experiences. These were analysed within subthemes. Table 4.5 documents each emergent category from the student voice activities.

Theme	Subtheme
<b>Reflection on Year 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning opportunities presented in Year 6</li> <li>• barriers to learning in Year 6</li> <li>• barriers to teaching in Year 6</li> <li>• evaluating teacher pedagogy</li> <li>• social experiences of Year 6</li> <li>• social experience and its impact on learning</li> </ul>
<b>Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positive general comments on SATs</li> <li>• negative general comments on SATs</li> <li>• SATs and their learning experience</li> <li>• learning opportunities post SATs</li> <li>• adult perspectives (teacher and carer(s)) on SATs</li> <li>• friendship and SATs</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations of Year 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excitement of starting a new school</li> <li>• learning expectations of Year 7 (positive)</li> <li>• learning expectations of year 7 (negative)</li> <li>• impact of myth on Year 7 expectations</li> <li>• expectations of Year 7 teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Transition Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comments on preparation for Year 7 (positive)</li> <li>• comments on preparation for Year 7 (negative)</li> <li>• anxiety associated with transition</li> <li>• social expectations of Year 7</li> <li>• Year 7 induction days</li> <li>• transition procedures</li> </ul>

**Table 4.5** Categories from the student voice activity (Phase 2)

<b>Observer:</b> PK	<b>School:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b> 9 am <i>to</i> 10 am				
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Other Adults:</b> 1	<b>Yr Grp:</b> 6	<b>Write up:</b>				
<b>Teacher Exp:</b> 15+	<b>Foc. Grp:</b>	<b>Activity:</b> CL	CA	PG	LT	Ass	Mt
<b>Summary of Activity (incl. Lesson Aims and Objectives)</b> Literacy – to write the opening of our Cinderella-type story.  <b>VCOP</b> – Openers, connectives, speech.							
<b>Synopsis:</b>  Start – Carpet activity in front of the whiteboard. Quick synopsis of Cinderella using displayed visual prompts. Recap on first 3 paragraphs written.  T – big gestures, especially use of hands to emphasise different points of the explanation.  TA – given group of children to work with who were absent yesterday – catch up.  Paired discussion activity on the carpet – discussing individual stories so far.  Move to circle on the carpet – using feelings to explain synopsis. T drawing out lots of descriptive words and phrases.  <b>17 minutes on carpet</b>  Move to seating pods. Book monitor to distribute books. Children move to work independently.  T circulates & supports individual tables.  Lots of visual prompts on wall, board, gesture.  As children's work progresses – emphasis on assessment – moving to the next level.  Shares student work with the class. Admits not being able to spell a word and gives a child an individual lesson on using the dictionary.  Think break . . . Reward with stickers.  Tactile – rubs a student's arm for praise and reassurance.				<b>Comments on transfer issues:</b>  Children quickly settled into class routine – felt very comfortable sitting on the carpet.  Large gestures emphasising key vocabulary. T continually referring to key words – never compromising these.  Smooth transition with lots of focused time on the carpet to prepare children for independent work at desks.  Visual resources to hand in classroom – display boards, whiteboard, information cards, prompt table mats – visually enriched.  T continually physically down to child level – always working to the side of the child, never overshadowing them.			
<b>Description of room:</b> 'How do you feel today?' board. Children's work on Aztecs and Volcanic Vocabulary. Level descriptors – writing targets Information placemats on each table.				<b>Summary of seating arrangements:</b> Pods in groups of 4 or 6.  See teacher travel sheet.			
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Op</b> 5	<b>Cl</b> 4	<b>Dis</b> 4	<b>Ext</b> 2	<b>Dir</b> 29	<b>HU</b> 2	<b>Keywords:</b> Openers, Connectives, Speech.

**Figure 4.3:** Lesson observation record sheet



#### **4.4.4 Issues arising from Phase 2**

Issues identified in Phase 2 influenced data collection tools for Phase 3. Despite similarities in tools used in each phase, Phase 2 informed the focus of data analysis and deepened understanding of emergent themes that transpired from the data. The three common themes identified below have the potential to increase anxiety and affect a child at transfer. Questions identified considered:

- the structure of learning in Year 6. The sample children identified their learning within the context and influence of SATs. Therefore, the structure of learning categorised itself with the framework of pre-SATs, SATs and post-SATs. This framework questioned the impact of SATs by asking whether teachers' motivation to ensure children reached, or exceeded, expected targets was in order to improve the standing of the school, or because it was in the best interest of the child's education?
- since children develop independence in their learning within the contexts of an almost singular mesosystem, what is the relationship between the child's learning micro- and mesosystems? Can a child reconstruct mesosystems through the microsystem? Does each continually influence the other?
- that Year 6 class teachers influenced children's expectations of Year 7. The concept raised two issues: the basis on which conversations about transition were founded; and language demands between primary and school and the consistencies of terminology used.

#### **4.5 Phase 3 data collection**

Phase 1 introduced the process and procedures of transition, which Phase 2 developed, so Phase 3 signified the conclusion for explaining successes and concerns with each case. Phase 3 used methods identical to those used in Phase 2. Phase 3 occurred at the start of a child's secondary school career and was built on the reflections of Phase 2 juxtaposed with realistic expectations of the sample children's new learning environment. This environment entailed significant changes in participation and active membership of the variety of microsystems secondary school offers. Not only did this framework provide new

social network models identified in Figure 1.2 (Chapter 1), but it challenged skills and understanding developed within the child's primary education learning model. Each method I deployed produced data that contributed to understanding the stabilising features of Year 7. These data considered the relationship between the child, family and their peers. Phase 3 also moves from a singular model of the influence of a teacher, class peers and family on learning, to the complexities of multiple learning environments that secondary school represented.

Unfortunately, I was denied access to Case 1's destination school towards the end of the Phase 2 data collection period. Therefore, Case 1 did not have a comparative lesson observation, though Phase 3 independent learning activity and student voice activities took place in the sample children's primary school hall after school hours. In addition, Child 1 could not attend both activities, but it was agreed that I would interview the child at his home, and the parent also agreed to be interviewed. This gave comparative insights into Case 1's transition programme and observations about the destination school. Using the profile of Child 1, another child, with an identical profile in terms of age, similar personality, attainment and family background, was substituted into the research activities.

The purpose of the independent learning activity was to identify self-regulated changing learning behaviours between Phases 2 and 3. In Phase 3 the sample children were asked to construct a tower using spaghetti and craft materials. The tower had to have at least two floors, and remain standing, or remain in shape. Each group was given 30 minutes' construction time. Basic instructions were given to the groups with very limited interaction between participants and researcher. The children made choices about whether to construct a two-dimensional or three-dimensional shape, and materials required to give the tower a sustained strength. The activity took place in an unfamiliar room within the secondary schools for Cases 2 and 3, though Case 1 children worked in their former primary school hall. In comparison to Phase 2, transcriptions of these observations included non-linguistic features of gesture and informal acknowledgements between participants.

Initial analysis identified comparative themes to Phase 2. However, additional sub-themes emerged that included the categories of on- and off-task talk. In addition, judgements were made about the quality of work produced. These are documented in Table 4.6 and Appendix 4.

Year 7 lesson observations in drama and mathematics for Cases 2 and 3 were conducted in the secondary department of Case 2. Transcriptions replicated the layout of

Phase 2 and included teacher and gender columns. Transcripts highlighted formal and informal learning conversations and mapped the lessons according to tasks set. For comparative purposes, initial coding and themes replicated Case 2. No judgements were formed on the quality of teaching, only on the quality of children's work.

Theme			Subtheme
Reflection of Year 6			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection of Year 6 (+/-)</li> <li>• Friendships in Year 6</li> <li>• Homework tasks in Year 6 (+/-)</li> </ul>
Statutory (SATs)	Assessment	Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of SATs (+/-)</li> <li>• Translation of SATs data</li> <li>• Benchmark testing at the start of Year 7</li> </ul>
Transition programme			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of Case 1 transition programme (+/-)</li> <li>• Preparation for Year 7 (+/-)</li> <li>• Induction programmes (+/-)</li> </ul>
Reflection of Year 7			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendships in Year 7</li> <li>• Changes in learning from Year 6 to Year 7 (+/-)</li> <li>• Homework provision</li> <li>• Quality of teaching between Year 6 and Year 7 (+/-)</li> </ul>
Evaluation of Year 7 provision			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School processes, policies and procedures</li> <li>• Attitude and behaviour of learners (+/-)</li> <li>• Attitude of older learners towards Year 7 (+/-)</li> </ul>
Use of academic language			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity of academic language</li> <li>• Discontinuity of academic language</li> <li>• Teacher talk to promote effective learning (+/-)</li> <li>• Development of learning (+/-)</li> </ul>

(+/- positive and negative aspects to code)

**Table 4.6:** Categories from the student voice activity (Phase 3)

I conducted student voice and parent interviews for Phase 3 during the penultimate week of the first half term of the sample children's Year 7. Questions were derived from issues that emerged from Phase 2. These allowed the sample children to reflect on their Year 7 experience; evaluate language for learning used in Year 7; and evaluate their transition programme from primary to secondary school. There was greater consistency of emergent themes across cases, with children offering detailed negative statements, which

allowed conclusions to develop about the exact nature and influence of the participants' transition experience. Table 4.6 identifies the dominant themes and their related subthemes.

#### **4.6 Feedback to case study schools**

Whilst developing the tools for data collection, it was important to consider the potential implications for the case study schools and the structure of the feedback offered. For the study to be effective, its methods needed to challenge transition and ensure the importance and sustainability of improvements made to each case's programme. However, the study did not include evaluation of such improvements, but developed understanding about why a significant proportion of children still find transition challenging. When I was negotiating access to the schools, it was agreed I would provide feedback, and part of my role would be to provide a framework for evaluation. Initial feedback to representatives of the leadership teams included discussions of the overall effectiveness of the schools' transition programmes and recommendations for improvements. Subsequently, feedback was cascaded to Year 6 teachers. Initial agendas included:

- teachers' expectations throughout the transition process.
- development of strategies to enhance teaching and learning. This included consistency of subject-specific vocabularies across primary and secondary school.
- development of speaking and listening strategies across the curriculum.
- the purpose and impact of SATs on a child's learning through the transition period.
- improvements to effective school partnerships and transition policy.

#### **4.7 Summary of Chapter 4**

This chapter extends the discussion of Chapter 3 by placing the tools used for data collection within the framework of the research design. The chapter considers the role and purpose of each of the three phases of investigation by relating them to Kelly's model of attribution theory (Kelly and Michela, 1980). Phase 1 developed initial information and beliefs of transition; Phases 2 and 3 developed cycles of attribution and consequences developed within the transition period. Therefore, each phase began to build explanations for varying contexts, and did not dictate participant responses. As a result, each phase

influenced decisions about methods and content, in order to offer comparative thematic analysis as children transferred from primary to secondary school.

Children were situated at the heart of each activity, in all methods developed, with data collection located between chronological events associated with transfer. As a result, the methods examined a reality of contexts in which children learn. They also allowed qualitative interpretation of data, drawing on a child's experience, expectations, participation and interaction within the transfer period (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This qualitative analysis contributed to the principles of grounded theory, and allowed understanding to emerge from within the data, rather than letting preconceived ideas influence data analysis. Grounded theory techniques also changed my preconceptions of transition, previously influenced by my professional practice and findings from the ORACLE studies (Galton *et al*, 1999b). It furthered issues of demands placed on children through language, SATs, and disjointed learning provision.

- *Phase 1, the Preliminary investigation*, collated data from stakeholders and the sample children representing each case. Semi-structured interviews were used to collate case-specific data. These interviews also developed initial understanding of issues, experiences and participation within the differing transition models. The chapter discusses the purpose of student voice activities.
- *Phase 2* began to develop explanations for issues in transition. Observations of children in formal and informal learning environments allowed comparisons to be made between social and learning participation. The 'raft' construction activity placed the sample children in an environment in which they had to co-operate to complete a problem-solving activity. In comparison, the lesson observations developed understanding of the influence of teacher and child behaviours in learning development. The final investigative method employed in Phase 2 involved a student voice activity with children giving accounts of their experiences and expectations of transfer throughout their Year 6. Each method produced rich comparative data.
- *Phase 3* used similar methods to those used in Phase 2, to observe the sample children in the new social and learning network models that secondary school offers. While the methods employed replicated Phase 2, the content of the independent learning activity and student voice questions changed.

- *Feedback to case-study schools* provided further conversations between stakeholders about the findings and evaluation of their own case's transition model. It also developed understanding about why a significant proportion of children still find transition challenging, and related thoughts within the context of each case. The feedback offered opportunities to validate the study's methods and test the trustworthiness of the data analysed.

## Chapter 5

### Case Study Analysis

*'It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.'*

**Ursula K LeGuin (2012)**

#### 5.1 Introduction

Data collections, divided into three discrete phases within the sample children's transition year, produced three stories that were different in construction and similar in their conclusions. Sample children had a unique story to tell of their experience and expectations at transfer. They confidently probed and evaluated their setting giving insight of their learning journeys to secondary school, including barriers they faced and alternative routes they took with unpredicted outcomes. The first phase collected contextual data from professional stakeholders and the sample children. This clarified the expected processes and outcomes of transfer. The second phase focused on the sample children's learning and evaluation of provision that Year 6 offered. The third phase used similar methods to evaluate the transfer to secondary school and focus on Year 7 learning behaviours. Data collections offered an introduction, middle and conclusion to the children's learning stories situated in each case study.

I wrote case reports that gave detailed accounts and summaries of the data collected. This analysis was used to identify the main points of this investigation and to structure the in-depth-analysis of Chapter 6. This chapter is organised into a synopsis of each phase of data collection. It identifies similarities and differences between each case.

#### 5.2 Phase 1: Preliminary investigation

The preliminary investigation was designed to collect contextual data from all stakeholders within each unique transition programme at the start of the research programme. It outlines details and initial evaluations of existing practices. The investigation allowed detailed pictures of the macro- and exosystems of classroom and learning practices across Year 6 and Year 7 to emerge. Each layer portrayed initial pictures of classroom teachers' skills in supporting and challenging children at transfer; developed awareness of

factors influencing a child's learning; and identified language demands placed on children for a translucent learning process from primary to secondary school. Each case identified procedures to ease the psychological impact of transition. However, each case demonstrated key developments that needed attention in order to ease future transition programmes. Tables 5.1a to 5.1d compare and contrast the initial findings of each case.

### **5.2.1 Support for children and their caregivers during transition**

All stakeholders actively participated within each case's transition programme. However, despite having calendared time for key transition events throughout the children's Year 6, each group of stakeholders operated with differing chronologies according to perceived importance. For example, cases commonly identified the sample children's transition journey as beginning at the start of Year 6. In contrast, their teachers' activities were arranged according to the school-year calendar. These are documented in Table 5.2. Caregivers participated informally by supporting their child with making choices and understanding the possible uncertainties transition offered. However, their main contributions occurred during October and March.

Analysis of Phase 1 data concluded that the discrepancy between each case's support for children and caregivers increased anxiety for the sample children. In the early stages of the sample children's transition year, the children felt that their classroom teacher did not manage their transition needs effectively. For example, Case 1 commented that they did not feel part of the formal transition process. During open evenings, there was no classroom work to prepare children for the event and no post-event evaluation. Dates and prospectuses were given out with little or no discussion. Also, unless the child had additional educational needs, support for caregivers was minimal, and caregivers had to request it. However, support was given to caregivers of children with English as an additional language with completion of transfer application forms.

**Researcher:** Do you support parents through the process of applying to the local authority?

**Senior Leader:** We supported one particular child last year. His parents were Polish and we supported them with actually completing the form because they were having a few problems with it. So that type of support is available if they want it, and then our job really finishes for a while until we get to May/June time.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 interview with the senior leadership team



Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 1: Support for children and their caregivers during transition</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The placing of children at the heart of the transition process was the most frequently recurring subtheme for all professional participants.</li> <li>Professional participants' expectations ensured all children's learning needs and learning opportunities were fulfilled during transition.</li> <li>Although the sample children felt supported by their Year 6 teachers, they did not feel part of the transition process, even though their transfer experience began at the start of their Year 6.</li> <li>Year 6 teachers' inexperience of Year 7 diminished potential support offered. Their influence and knowledge stemmed either from experience of their own school days, or perceptions developed from previous transition experience and anecdotal understanding of routines.</li> <li>Transition procedures were in place for children with additional educational needs and their caregivers. The role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Inclusion Manager was central to this; they visited families, ensured that effective provision was in place for the start of Year 7, and that relevant information was cascaded to relevant teaching staff. Case 1 used pupil data sheets to highlight specific children that needed urgent discussion.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Transition was a 'collective' term used by all participants that detailed a specific protocol generated by the primary school for interpretation by secondary colleagues.	Year 6 teachers commented on 'developing' work between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers, in particular referencing opportunities offered by a Year 4 to Year 8 creative curriculum.	Year 6 teachers spoke of the need to develop a more translucent process reflecting the experience offered to the children of Case 2.
Unless the child had additional educational needs, or specifically requested it, little support was offered to caregivers to help them make an informed choice of secondary school.	All professional participants acknowledged rigorous support systems in place for Year 6 and Year 7 caregivers. Systems supported by an ethos of all-through schooling.	The sample children detailed concerns about inconsistent sanctions between their primary and secondary provision, and were concerned whether their additional educational needs would be met.
Acknowledgement by all participants of developing transition support structures bridging relationships between the primary and secondary school.	There were calendric transition workshops for caregivers and children. Case 2 hosted these workshops later in the academic year. Case 2 hosted a summer school for their new Year 7 intake at the end of the summer holidays.	Acknowledgment by all participants of developing transition support structures between the two sites. Transition programs were still in their early stages.
As part of the transition process, a secondary teacher from the main secondary school taught French and science to Year 6 children.	For some curriculum subjects, especially science, children were taught a primary curriculum in secondary school classrooms.	Year 6 teachers spoke of inconsistencies within both the transition programme, and children experiencing a secondary style curriculum. This was due to the geography of Case 3 limiting Year 6 opportunities.
Sample children detailed myth generated by adult family members, rather than peers.	The sample children felt less supported and relied on peers and siblings to inform them about life in Year 7.	18% of the sample children's comments related to myth developed by older siblings and peers.

**Table 5.1(a):** Phase 1 – Support for caregivers and their children during transition

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2: School partnerships, data transfer and transition evaluation</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendric timeline for the process of transition was developed post Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs), and governed by other secondary school commitments.</li> <li>• There were no transition policies in place to support school partnerships and regulate procedures. All cases had transfer procedures in place.</li> <li>• Successful data transfer in place for children with additional educational needs, but discrepancy in data for other children. All Year 6 teachers questioned the identity of the actual recipient of the data.</li> <li>• Insufficient communication between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers prevented transition becoming a translucent process.</li> <li>• Key Stage 2 data was transferred annually, but confusion existed about the transfer of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) data, and the sitting of Cognitive Ability Tests and individual curriculum tests at the start of Year 7</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Case 1 situated in flexible catchment areas with three defined secondary schools. However, the majority of pupils go to a rural comprehensive school.	Case 2 operates in very strict catchment policies developed through the Local Education Authority. As a result, with the exception of Cases 2 and 3, transfer schools are directed by the primary headteacher, which, for a minority, is governed by past perceptions of the original secondary school. These political and social issues affect Year 7 intakes.	All children in Year 6, except one, transferred into the same secondary provision. The sole child who did not, transferred into a local special school that offered better accommodation to support additional educational needs.
No formal partnership arrangements with local secondary school, therefore, no cluster meetings or commonalities in curriculum design.	No formal partnership arrangements except for regular primary headteachers' meetings that Case 2 attend due to it being an all-through school. There are no representatives from any other secondary schools.	Year 6 teachers described transition procedures as slightly 'haphazard', and geographical location of Case 3 hindered any potential development work.
Transition procedures initiated by Year 6 teachers with support for children 'hidden' in curriculum content.	Year 6 teachers stated that there was a need for consistent approaches to transition throughout the transition year.	Teachers felt that any dips in attainment were due to procedures not running concurrently with a child's emotional and academic ability.
Transfer of data led to the largest discrepancy of comments by teachers. The secondary school led on data requirements. The Local Education Authority did not dictate this.	Data within Case 2 transfers annually, with consistent assessment and recording systems in place.	Despite having assessment and recording systems consistent with those of the transfer school, concerns raised included actual recipients of data.
There are no evaluations on transition process or procedures. Processes recur annually with little change.	Evaluation of transition occurs annually between caregivers and children. Teachers are not involved in evaluation processes.	There was no evaluation process of Case 3 transition programmes.

**Table 5.1(b): Phase 1 - School partnerships, data transfer and transition evaluation**

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 3: Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SATs emerged as the second largest influence on a child's transition year.</li> <li>SATs and Teacher Assessment data transferred into all secondary schools.</li> <li>All cases felt a pressure from Government on schools and into classrooms to ensure all children either met or exceeded Key Stage 2 targets.</li> <li>Sample children spoke of SATs introducing complicated vocabulary that required learning in order to access test papers.</li> <li>Post-SATs allowed teachers to focus on a more creative and varied curriculum. This time also allowed formal transition procedures to take place.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
The sample children viewed SATs as a 'big' test and a positive tool for learning that also provided a good foundation in basic skills.	The sample children viewed SATs as a challenge that increased anxiety during preparation.	Children spoke tentatively of SATs and anxieties that test preparation had on their learning experience.
All professional participants reiterated that SATs preparation did not get in the way of a broad and balanced curriculum.	Preparation for SATs dominated Case 2's curriculum, as children learnt the language of the test in order to access it.	Year 6 curriculum developed through knowledge required by SATs.
There was some impingement on curriculum time midway through the academic year.	SATs developed a high level of dependency in the children on the teacher, who had to develop learning sequences in rigid formats, continually feeding information to ensure children met targets.	Teachers spoke of learning demands of sitting a 'big' test and having to learn and apply knowledge verbatim.
Teacher assessments were in line with SATs results. Continual monitoring and moderation of work ensured consistency.	The pressures of SATs made children more passive in their learning, so that they lacked confidence to enquire and explore tools of learning. For example, when a recent Year 6 workshop challenged children to ask questions about their learning, they had difficulty with this task.	A conflict of definitions emerged between confident, dependent and independent learners.
SATs classification regarded as a tool for building confidence, and subsequently building learning.	Extreme political pressures placed on schools that were in challenging circumstances to meet and exceed targets. According to the headteacher this had consequences further up the school for meeting targets in GCSE English and Mathematics. Year 7 teachers were trying to catch up to ensure all children regained independence in their learning to access a coherent Key Stage 4 curriculum.	Children needed opportunities to rehearse SATs language, as well as a selection of tools to answer questions accurately.

**Table 5.1(c):** Phase 1 – Statutory Assessment Tests

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 4: Transfer and use of academic language during transition</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The highest count of subthemes generated included negative aspects of academic language and its association with continuation of learning.</li> <li>All cases acknowledged that SATs increased language demand throughout the transition year.</li> <li>The pilot and development of a creative curriculum allowed a broader approach to literacy and numeracy.</li> <li>Continuity of subject-specific terminology was erratic due to the absence of both a formalised approach involving cluster groups, and collaboration on academic work between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers. The sample children often referred to different terms used by different teachers, for example: 'germs' versus 'bacteria', 'dp' versus 'decimal place', and 'apparatus' versus 'equipment'.</li> <li>Year 6 teachers highlighted differences of subject specialisms between primary and secondary education. It was an expectation that primary teachers were 'generalists' in all areas of the curriculum, and that Year 7 teachers were specialists in their own subject areas.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Professional participants confirmed that they released confident and articulate learners into Year 7.	Professional participants spoke passionately about socio-economically deprived families not having the linguistic ability to rehearse and refine language. Some children were not encouraged to converse in their homes.	For some children, minimal opportunities allowed rehearsal of learning conversations with families and peers.
The sample children's anxieties about learning increased with the introduction of a 'trickier vocabulary book' for mathematics during SATs preparation.	The sample children spoke of a conflict between teachers' use of 'educational' words. Year 6 teachers did not enforce teacher definitions of Year 7 vocabulary.	The sample children perceived that their primary provision did not prepare them for the complicated vocabulary used in Year 7.
Improved language acquisition increased learning ability and confidence.	Children's oral ability influenced reading and writing ability, and thus formed a potential barrier to learning.	More language barriers identified to learning continuity than any other type of barrier recorded.
Disequilibrium of learning partnerships between peers and primary/secondary clusters did not contribute to effective and confident learning.	Children had the ability to flounder in learning and teacher-dominated climates. Learning was 'verbatim' in order to access knowledge and understanding for SATs.	SATs produced passive learners who were 'receivers' of information with ability to 'sift' knowledge.
It was a perceived expectation of the Year 6 teacher that primary specialist taught up to Level 5 attainment, thus preparing children to begin Level 6 work after transition.	Teachers continually had to adapt their pedagogy to ensure children could select tools effectively to enhance learning. For example, children did not have the confidence to question either methods or understanding.	Language progression correlated with teacher expectation of learners in all phases of education.

**Table 5.1(d):** Phase 1 - Transfer and use of academic language during transition

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### Local Authority and School Transition Arrangements.

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<b>September</b>	Transfer school open evenings.
<b>October</b>	Transfer school applications submitted to the local education authority.
<b>March</b>	Transfer school choice issued to caregivers. Caregivers have the right to appeal if they are unhappy with the placement.
<b>June/July</b>	Formal transfer induction days and informal classroom transition focused work.
<b>September</b>	Year 6 children start Year 7.
<b>January</b>	Year 7 children should be fully integrated into their transfer school.

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**Table 5.2:** Calendared transition arrangements for each case

Case 3 identified an increase of support to caregivers through workshops delivered by their teachers and teachers from the transfer school. Teachers acknowledged that caregivers were fully integrated into calendared events. Further support was offered to caregivers of children with additional educational needs. Despite these claims, the sample children had the highest proportion of comments relating to ‘myth’ associated with transfer.

The myths detailed anxieties connected to their transfer school’s sanctions and concerns about the school meeting individual needs.

**Child 6:** What I’m worried about is that I have got anger problems and, if I flip out, I will hit someone and I’ll get in trouble for this [ . . . ] People at that school don’t like me.

**Case 3:** Phase 1 student voice activity

Professional stakeholders working within Case 2 claimed that rigorous support systems were in place for caregivers and their children during the transition year. Members of the senior leadership team met with every child who entered Year 7 and made further home visits for all children with additional educational needs. Case 2 offered caregivers pre- and post-transition workshops and extended their transition programme into Year 7. Transferring children attended a summer school to acclimatise themselves with daily secondary phase routines. However, despite the continuity of support offered in an all-age school, the sample children echoed the concerns of Cases 1 and 3. The children recognised that by transferring into the school’s secondary phase, they had to transfer learning effectively from the haven of their Year 6 classroom to Year 7 specialist teaching spaces. This anxiety was heightened with trepidation about meeting new subject teachers.

However, anecdotal evidence offered by the senior leadership team suggested that children transferring into new learning environments contained in the same building settled quickly into Year 7. They believed that with effective transition arrangements in place throughout the transfer year children were equipped to learn from day one.

**Senior leadership team:** I think what we are getting, compared to four or five years ago, is students who are more ready to learn. I think they are . . . I've noticed anecdotally that our Year 7s now settle very quickly in their habits of learning and they want to talk about their learning. We don't see . . . we don't have the issues with behaviour that we used to have. They seem to fit in very comfortably, I'm not as aware of the traumas that we used to have.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 interview with the senior leadership team

### 5.2.2 School partnerships, data transfer and transition evaluation

Analysis of data suggested that political, local authority and social issues affect the partnership development between primary and secondary schools. For sustainable partnerships, relations need to develop from Key Stage 1 with an open and shared dialogue between schools. Interestingly, teachers representing each case did not comment on effective cluster work with their transfer school. Case 2 identified that effective partnerships are dependent upon relationships with local headteachers and restriction of catchment areas. Members of the senior leadership team regularly attended primary headteacher meetings within the authority. There were no other secondary representatives to develop effective transition work. In contrast, Case 1 operated within an open catchment policy whereby children could choose between three transfer schools, one of which was in different authority. However, despite such choice, children tended to opt for the same transfer school. This was due more to family tradition than academic success or the school's future progression.

**Senior leadership team 1:** When you have children who have specific needs and you are aware of which schools will, or won't, suit that particular child, that is when [an] approach is made to parents, "Have you actually considered . . . ?", so they might want to get in contact with the Special Needs Co-Ordinator at [school] who is absolutely fantastic. So . . . for the vast majority of children who go [to the school] because they have their older brother or sister there.

**Senior leadership team 2:** We also send to [school A] and [school B]. [School A], which is also very good, know that our children tend to be the exception rather than the rule.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 interview with senior leadership team

Inconsistencies between the reality and expectation of data transfer emerged from all cases. Case 1 professional stakeholder interviews identified inconsistencies between

understanding and clarity of data for transfer. The senior leadership team spoke of transfer schools only requiring Statutory Assessment data and individual assessment sheets to develop pen-pictures of children. Despite teachers developing Assessing Pupil Progress data formalised between partnership schools, this was no longer required. Cases 1 and 3 highlighted concerns about the reception of pupil data. Year 6 teachers were expected to collate a wealth of data for each child, but secondary partners did not acknowledge such data.

**Senior leadership team 2:** Secondary Schools do not ask for much more data than their SATs results and very often what you send them generally gets put in the corner and collects dust.[ . . . ] It is frustrating because I think particularly school reports are worth reading. Basically in our plastic wallets we have old copies of their school reports, IEPs and I'm not sure how often they get read.

**Senior leadership team 1:** I don't think they are read unless a child has got a statement, then they get read.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 interview with senior leadership team

**Teacher 2:** Documentation is taken every week for levels and my impression is – I could be wrong as I have only been through the process once here – that all that information is not relayed as effectively as it could be to the teachers in Year 7. It seems like a fruitless mission for us and I've found that quite surprising with the children being in apparently the same school. I have had several conversations with people about the same children, and still continuing to have these conversations, giving the same information about the same child on the run up to Christmas.

**Case 3:** Phase 1 – interview with teacher 2

Case 1 teachers expressed anxiety and frustration at having to complete detailed transfer forms for each child in their class. Again, uncertainty emerged, as there was no acknowledgement of who actually read the forms. To ensure individual pupil conversations took place between teaching staff in the partnership schools, teachers were required to highlight requests.

**Teacher 1:** They could be better. We do the transition paperwork and put on there, "So-and-so should not be in a group with So-and-so", or "So-and-so would really need to have this person in their tutor group as an anchor", and we do all that. But we could really do with having face to face meetings between the teachers. [ . . . ] I have written on tops of pupils' forms "Please, please phone me and talk to me about this person" so I can fill them in. But unless you do that you are not going to talk.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 interview with Year 6 class teachers

In each case there was no formal transition policy, only a list of concurrent procedures in line with their secondary transfer school. As a result, there was limited in-school evaluation. Only Case 2 offered evaluation of their transition programmes for caregivers and children. Teachers were not part of this process. In addition, no formal

professional development associated with transition was offered. Case 2 identified a working trip to New York hosted by their sponsor that had influenced the development of the transition summer school. However, there was no other training. Case 3 professional stakeholders described their transition programme as haphazard with a process that required formalisation. Teachers furthered the discussion that evidence of a child's dip in attainment was due to procedures not running concurrently with a child's learning development. Case 1 classified transition as a 'collective term' with little significance on schools' processes and procedures. Successful transfer was dependent on a cohesive and sustainable partnership formalised between primary and secondary schools.

### 5.2.3 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)

Across all three cases, SATs were culturally embedded into Year 6. All participants spoke consistently of the impact of SATs on a child's learning with remarkable similarity between responses from the sample children and professional stakeholders. Case 2 detailed political pressures that worked through the school's exosystems into each Year 6 classroom. Pressures placed on primary schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances, epitomised learning within curriculum provision and learning development. Teachers focused on their classes achieving the national expectation, as opposed to successful learning progression. Thus, definitions of classroom practice were of children having a high dependency on their teacher, rigid lesson formats and continual feed into developing tools to access test papers. As a result, tension between definitions of confident and dependent learners emerged. Responses indicated that the impact on learning influenced children into Year 7. As dependency was so great in Year 6, Year 7 teachers were required to teach their students skills to access independent learning opportunities in preparation for public examinations in Key Stage 4. Therefore, post-SATs children were on continual 'catch up.'

**Senior Leadership Team 1:** I am thinking SATs language and probably the language of SATs that the teachers will get into and [be] using a lot will be different to what they will use in Year 7. [ . . . ] One thing, which I would like to add in response to your question about the SATs, is that one of the things that we picked up at (Case 3) last year was that we had a superb Year 6 teacher up there who got those kiddies and moved them on leaps and bounds to get them their targets, but by doing so made them totally reliant on her. So what we have experienced is those children now find it very difficult. They now have to start working more independently because, in order to get them to that point in their SATs, the teacher literally had to drill them.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 senior leadership team interview



Despite Case 1 categorising SATs as a positive learning experience, issues emerged of pressures from the testing regimes placed on the sample children. Children equated building learning to building confidence that provided a firm foundation in basic skills. However, the sample children expressed concern about pressures placed on them by their caregivers and themselves to achieve a successful level in a 'big' test. Within the SATs framework, children had to learn new vocabularies to access answers and were given textbooks, including a 'trickier vocabulary maths book' to support learning. This approach increased the sample children's anxiety .

**Researcher:** Would you say there is a different SATs' language to the language that you learn in a class?

**Child 4:** The words do seem harder and they mean the same.

**Child 1:** You do have a lot more trickier words and we have to find out what they mean in order to get a good level.

**Child 4:** In our maths . . .

**Child 3:** We have a trickier words maths book and we have to learn these words and have tests on what they mean.

**Child 4:** Some of them are hard to understand.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 student voice activity

Case 3 defined knowledge gained by SATs as both an opportunity to broaden curriculum provision, and a tool to narrow learning pathways. All cases claimed that SATs did impinge on the Year 6 curriculum due to direct learning and revision for test preparation. In addition, teachers had to assess progress in foundation subjects. A range of assessment, co-ordinated with external SATs requirements, dominated the sample children's transition year. Ironically, only SATs results are in the public domain. In all cases, learning demands placed on children were significantly increased and redirected transition preparation away from the classroom.

#### **5.2.4 Transfer and use of academic language during transition**

Issues of language emerged as the highest recurring theme across all three cases. Subthemes were categorised into three interrelated areas. The first concerned continuity of language from primary to secondary education. Here the sample children raised issues that did not reflect comments from their respective teachers. The second identified teacher expectations associated with the type and complexity of language used to enhance learning abilities. The third subtheme developed understanding of the influence of language from the home on a child's learning. The sample children operated within a variety of microsystems that generated differing language abilities ranging from 'formal' classroom

dialogue to 'informal' family and peer talk. For children to cope with the language demands placed on them within the formal structures of school, they had to transfer language into each related system. Data suggested that children were literate in each independent system, but struggled in related systems.

Conflicts emerged with teachers using consistent and correct subject-specific vocabulary. Case 2 identified teacher dialogue employed in Year 6 as being simplistic compared to that used in Year 7. The sample children had experienced learning from secondary phase teachers who confused terminology already taught. For example, children had to learn 'germs' in Year 6, but were told that in Year 7 they would learn 'bacteria.'

**Child 1:** [Year 7 teachers] use more educational words. We were talking about bacteria the other day and we had to call it germs. [Teacher] said we're not to call it germs because in Year 7 we had to call it bacteria. It's annoying because in our book we had to write germs instead of bacteria.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 student voice activity

Case 1 and Case 3 children emphasised their limited experience of Year 7 teachers. Each identified that Year 7 teachers used more complex language than that used in Year 6. As a result, the sample children did not feel adequately prepared by their primary provision. Inconsistencies, whereby teachers continually changed methods to ensure sufficient learning of oral and written language, developed into learning barriers.

Case 3 identified teacher expectations affecting a child's language progression. If primary provision was perceived to be 'simplistic' and test-driven, secondary provision was too 'complex.' Inconsistency of language determined the learning relationships developed. The sample children spoke of increased learning opportunities in Year 7 due to specialist classrooms. These affected responses about Year 6 provision, as the children equated resources to language development. In addition, the sample children believed that a confident teacher developed confident learners. Therefore, juxtaposing teacher expectation with confidence contributed significantly to an effective learning environment. The classroom teacher reiterated the concept of a consistent and developing 'learning' language:

**Teacher 2:** A lot of children at an early age take a literal translation of any language . . . some teachers use limited language because I think they think they can learn better. I believe we should use exactly the same language and technical words – we should agree on particular words that we use to describe, for example, in literacy a non-chronological report. I think that should be used . . . That's what I'm trying to do at the moment, to have this generic form of specific technical language so that the children understand what the teacher is referring to on a subject level.

### **Case 3: Phase 1 Year 6 teacher interview**

Data suggested that language is a development tool that is impossible to develop in isolated contexts. To access learning, children need to have a continually rehearsed functioning language placed in learning contexts. Teachers have the ability to de-skill their classes by minimising and simplifying dialogue. Therefore, to maximise language opportunities learning has to challenge continually throughout the transition year and into Year 7.

The third issue identified highlighted the influence language in the home had on a child's learning ability. Case 2 and Case 3 recognised that the impact of language used in the home in deprived socio-economic areas has a significant influence on a child's linguistic ability. For children to develop functioning learning language there is a basic need to rehearse in a range of environments.

**Teacher 1:** A lot of children do not get spoken to, they get spoken at. They are not given the opportunity to converse. They spend little time with peers, and parents might tell them they have to do this and this . . . children are not given the opportunity to develop their vocabulary. You can see it in class, some have an amazing vocabulary . . . there are those who can and those who can't. It is those who can't that tend to appear [not to] converse with other adults or peers.'

### **Case 3: Phase 3 Year 6 teacher interview**

For effective learning opportunities, children have to learn to transfer knowledge between formal and informal contexts. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of students attending Case 2 and Case 3 were not given opportunities to converse in their home environment. Anecdotal evidence provided claimed that from an early age some children were spoken 'at' instead of 'to.' For some, this is also representative of their classroom environment whilst learning specific knowledge to access SATs. For children to be challenged in their learning, they need to be challenged in language.

## **5.2.5 Summary of preliminary investigation**

The preliminary investigation produced data to develop understanding of each case. Tables 5.1a-d provide an analysis of similarities and differences between the themes discussed for each case. Three main concerns relating to transition emerged.

- The first questioned a child's ability to decontextualise knowledge, skills and understanding, and to transfer these into the variety of contexts a secondary school offered. Data also suggested that limitations to curriculum provision in Year 6, and

inconsistencies of development of academic language, hindered such de-contextualisation.

- The second concern arose from the pressures that both stakeholders and primary schools face from SATs. These pressures cascade through each developmental system from macrosystems to microsystems of classroom life, and again, diminish development of transferable skills. The emphasis on preparing and guiding children through the test means they are de-skilled in other curriculum areas. The sample children's preparation for Year 7 focused on building basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Finally, inconsistencies of subject-specific language between primary and secondary schools place unnecessary demands on children's development as sustainable and confident learners. Curriculum restraints produced unrehearsed language skills. Therefore, each child's preparation was driven by perceptions, rather than experience, of Year 6 teachers minimising the notion of a progressive transition programme.

### **5.3 Phase 2: the sample children's transition year**

Phase 2 collected a range of data from the case study children. Collections occurred throughout the transition year prior to the children starting at their transfer school. This phase recorded data that complemented Phase 1 by drawing on experiences within mesosystems and microsystems of classroom life. Having the children situated within their learning environments permitted detailed understanding of the learning relationships between peers and teacher to develop. Data also gave insight into learning cues and language that supported and hindered learning. The student voice activity reflected the sample children's Year 6 experiences and expectations of their transfer school. Lesson observations and independent learning activity collated data associated with the sample children's learning experiences and language in constructing and de-contextualising transferable knowledge across activities.

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 1: Reflections of Year 6</b>		
<b>% of counted comments</b>		
28% positive comments vs 6% negative	14% positive comments vs 12% negative	31% positive comments vs 3% negative
<b>Similarities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children spoke highly of their Year 6 teachers, acknowledging that they created a safe and supportive learning environment. All teachers had consistent classroom routines, in which children participated easily.</li> <li>Teachers facilitated work appropriately. There were few opportunities presented to children to select what they deemed to be appropriate and challenging work.</li> <li>Teachers made decisions that involved task progression, completion and standards of work. The children spoke of making minimal contributions to these important areas of study.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences</b>		
The sample children defined teacher-child relationships developing from curriculum knowledge, and fair and consistent routines. This aided the removal of potential barriers to their learning.	The sample children classified teacher-child relationships as a team with a 'connection' between participants and the on-going dialogue.	The sample children defined teacher-child relationships as developing from individual personalities, not from learning dialogues.
Children struggled to identify strategies to evaluate and improve their work. They compared different learning strategies used in whole-class and group work.	Teachers taught learning techniques as opposed to knowledge development. The children spoke of continued assessment of numeracy and literacy as a barrier to their learning.	Teachers had a good understanding of pupils. This encouraged successful learning development and fostered secure relationships.
Learning issues concerned the impact of sharing classes with Year 5. Depending on the class they were in, there was some repetition of work. Children wanted greater challenges of work than the Year 5 curriculum offered.	Children spoke of working in a safe haven due to consistent classroom routines used across lessons.	Consistent routines developed by teachers encouraged a safe and productive learning environment.
During SATs revision, children spoke about a lack of independence in their learning. They detailed the use of past papers and learnt key terminology verbatim.	Children had difficulties with the scope of language used during 'carpet time'. Children spoke of pressures associated with immediate definition of words within an oral context.	
Social peer relationships were positive in the small age-related group environment. Children spoke of younger years invading their 'territory'.	Children enjoyed social aspects of academic workshops and 'reward' trips.	The children detailed new learning opportunities in Year 6. These included swimming lessons and a photography field trip.

**Table 5.3(a):** Phase 2 - Student voice activity: Reflections of year 6

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2: Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)</b>		
<b>% of counted comments</b>		
10% positive comments vs 14% negative	9% positive comments vs 23% negative	10% positive comments vs 26% negative
<b>Similarities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments related to three distinct phases of the children's Year 6: pre-SATs, SATs and post-SATs.</li> <li>Pre-SATs encouraged a development of learning relationships between children and their caregivers.</li> <li>Pre-SATs had restrictions on a broad and balanced curriculum, and there was evidence for this.</li> <li>SATs papers were easier to access than children anticipated. They all spoke of being prepared sufficiently for the testing period.</li> <li>Post-SATs, children spoke of relaxed routines, in particular those concerning homework.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences</b>		
Pre-SATs, the sample children concluded that teachers spoke little of SATs. However, there was a greater urgency and persistence with homework setting and completion.	Children spoke of SATs as a 'burden' for all participants including the unnecessary stress it placed on teachers.	Children described changes in teacher behaviours resulting in all participants working within a 'pressurised' environment.
SATs revision dominated the curriculum from March to May of the children's Year 6. The children spoke of continual completion of past papers and strategies to navigate them through examination questions.	Children spoke of many restrictions to their curriculum, in particular the impact of losing 'shared time' in the afternoon.	The curriculum was restricted with children receiving up to two literacy and numeracy lessons per day.
Children viewed SATs as a positive learning experience for developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy.		Children questioned the need for so much preparation, as the tests were easier than anticipated.
Children were not concerned about SATs, they just got on with the process.	Teachers supported children to visualise questions, helping them to navigate through the test papers. This removed some barriers to accessing the tests. Children compared sitting practice papers in the safe-haven of their classroom to sitting actual tests in a test room, which initially created a barrier.	Children spoke of greater urgency with the teaching of key concepts, working methods and continuous SATs preparation. All classroom language was associated with SATs in order for children to access test papers.
Post-SATs, children spoke of a 'fun' curriculum with less homework and more unstructured time. This resulted in greater anxiety of transfer as they did not feel ready, or rehearsed, for a new challenging learning environment.	Post-SATs teachers were less 'stressed' and continued with more demanding 'Level 6' work. Children and teachers developed a project-based curriculum, Murder Mystery.	Post-SATs, children described a more relaxed approach to learning with slower paced lessons. Learning objectives that used to take one hour, took two. Children described their teachers as being more relaxed and de-stressed.

**Table 5.3(b):** Phase 2 – Student voice activity: Statutory Assessment Tests

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 3: Transition programme evaluation</b>		
<b>% of counted comment</b>		
7% positive comments vs 18% negative	5% positive comments vs 2% negative	2% positive comments vs 0% negative
<b>Similarities</b>		
<i>There were no similarities between the cases for this theme.</i>		
<b>Differences</b>		
Children spoke of calendared events, generation of anxiety and evaluation of their existing transition programme. Events referred to initial open evenings at the start of their Year 6 and induction days in June.		
All children visited their transfer school at the start of Year 6, and some had further limited experience from participation in the transfer school's after-school swimming lessons.		
There was no formal induction programme between feeder and transfer schools, therefore, the children viewed this as no induction preparation.		
Anxiety stemmed from absence of shared information about impending induction days. Children spoke of losing a half day to visit their transfer school due to their primary school's Sports-Day with a visiting Olympic champion. They also detailed that they had received no information concerning their timetable for the two days, travel arrangements, or what to take. This caused anxiety for all participants.	Some anxiety generated from limited transition work undertaken during Year 6 and classroom visits to the secondary phase of the school.	
Children's suggested improvements to their transition programme included: regular visits to their transfer school; using the post-SATs period to formalise induction; and sharing of more induction information between schools.	Children detailed positive experiences with induction day workshops with an international business organisation.	Children detailed positive experiences with an induction day workshop led by an international business organisation.

**Table 5.3(c):** Phase 2 – Student voice activity: Transition programme evaluation

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 4: Expectations of Year 7</b>		
<b>% of counted comments</b>		
5% positive comments vs 13% negative	17% positive comments vs 17% negative	19% positive comments vs 8% negative
<b>Similarities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's expectations of Year 7 relied on teachers' perceptions.</li> <li>Children had limited insight into secondary school classrooms and Year 7-style lessons.</li> <li>There was limited discussion on myth, building size and impact of older peers on the children's transfer. Concerns expressed detailed learning opportunities and expectations of Year 7 teachers.</li> <li>According to the children, no induction had started at the time of the children's voice activity.</li> <li>There was little comparison of Year 6 to Year 7.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences</b>		
Expectations of Year 7 stemmed from children's embellished imaginations.	Children had a greater awareness of Year 7 than in Cases 1 and 3. They used 'basic' insights gained from their observations in and around the school about the reality of Year 7.	There was some awareness of opportunities in Year 7 from attendance at learning workshops.
Children spoke of the need to develop greater organisational skills, especially with setting and completion of homework.	Children spoke of the need to spend more Year 6 time in the secondary phase of the school in order to gain relevant experience for their transition. Children spoke with confidence about knowing some teachers and the senior leadership team.	The sample children's perception of teachers generated from experience of working with Year 7 PE staff. Children looked forward to new curriculum challenges by extending their existing knowledge of foundation subjects, especially the humanities.
Children expressed concern about sustainable progression of their learning, as they felt learning had faltered since their SATs.		Children expressed concern about remembering what they had learnt in year 6 and transferring it into Year 7. They spoke of a 'relaxed' gap between their SATs and the start of Year 7 where little learning occurred.
Children felt ready for the challenge of Year 7 and spoke of the need for new learning opportunities post-SATs.		Children spoke of being ready to meet new teachers and work with new resources. They had not exhausted relationships with their Year 6 teachers, but wanted to experience a more consistent and sustainable progression of learning.
There was no discussion relating to Year 7 sanctions.	There was little discussion about sanctions or socialising with older peers.	

**Table 5.3(d): Phase 2 – Student voice activity: Expectations of Year 7**



### **5.3.1 Student voice activity**

Student voice activities occurred during the final month before the sample children left primary school. Discussions generated from each case produced data evaluating the sample children's experiences in Year 6. The initial purpose of this activity was to understand influences on children's learning in their primary setting and determine how these they would successfully transfer into their new school. Influences included Year 6 provision, teachers and social relationships. However, analysis of the children's detailed responses indicated a deep understanding of their expectations within learning environments, utilising internal and external influences considered in Phase 1. These included varying demands placed on children's learning by teachers and external testing regimes. In addition, the children understood the effects of inconsistent school partnerships placing unnecessary demands on the continuum of learning. Responses did not necessarily align with previous transition studies (Galton *et al*, 1999b; Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010), but acknowledged a distinct awareness of factors contributing to sustainable progression of learning. Themes that emerged from the analysis were reflections of Year 6; SATs; transition programme evaluation; and expectations of Year 7. Each theme compared and contrasted the demands placed on children during their transition year.

### **5.3.2 Reflections of Year 6**

Despite commonalities between each case, differences were identified in statements within each student voice activity. These differences included suggested themes of: the impact of teacher relationships on learning; the Year 6 curriculum; and social relationships developed throughout the transition year. The role of the teacher contributed to each subtheme, acknowledging support of a child's learning and potentially creating barriers to accessing provision. Tables 5.3(a) to 5.3(d) document key findings for each case. Across all three cases, the sample children spoke highly of their classroom teacher, commenting on successful relationships developed throughout the academic year. The children described consistent classroom routines and the creation of safe learning environments. Children trusted their teacher's judgement and enjoyed having mutual respect between classroom participants. However, the children's perceptions of their teachers differed between cases in terms of their contribution to learning and social relationships. Case 1 identified their primary teachers as having secure knowledge of pupils' needs arising from a well-developed on-going relationship with them. The sample

children felt supported in their development and, as a result, thought that their teacher removed learning barriers. In contrast, Case 3 related to their teachers' personalities rather than learning dialogues. The sample children enjoyed having 'jokes' but also understood boundaries within lessons. Their learning benefitted from balancing formal and informal routines. By humanising learning experiences, the sample children spoke of teachers having a good understanding of their learning needs. Case 2 equated classroom relationships with all participants operating as a team. Thus, a 'learning connection' ensured consistency and confidence. This connection was defined as a mutual respect between teacher and learner that was built on trust.

**Child 3:** . . . you get [the] chance to get used to your own teacher because we only have one teacher. You get a long time to get used to them [ . . . ] in primary you might like the one teacher and that's the only teacher that actually teaches you.

**Child 2:** I understand what you're trying to say, but it's like you connect with that one teacher through the whole day and they get to know you in different ways. Each day you might have different feelings. [In secondary school] you have so many different teachers, that you don't connect with this one teacher, but when you're [in primary school] Year 6 teachers are really good and you connect with them because we all know them so well.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Children 2 and 3 made comparisons between the safe haven of the primary phase to that of the transfer school. Firstly, both children discussed having time to develop a close relationship with one teacher in their primary setting. The relationship provided security for learning and emotional support. Child 3 continued the analysis of a 'connection' between participants understanding good and bad days. This did not disrupt learning and confidence. However, secondary provision had the potential for learning disruption as children recognised that they had to develop a range of teacher-peer relationships.

There were differences of provision between cases. These included the delivery of curriculum and quality of teaching received. All sample children understood that they needed to learn independently to access a secondary-style curriculum; all their teachers also perceived this. However, the children did not receive consistent pedagogical provision, causing barriers to their learning and confidence. Case 1 spoke of three challenges. The first issue referred to mixed-aged classes, as the sample children shared lesson time with Year 5 pupils. This caused conflict due to some repetition of work in Year 6 and variations in curriculum between classes. Secondly, the sample children identified some independence of work, as they had opportunities to support the Year 5s in class. There was little response to questions relating to strategies used in classroom learning. For

example, children detailed strategies for completing work set and cited differences between whole-class and group tasks.

**Child 3:** Sometimes in lessons, we have something a bit more challenging to do than Year 5. Sometimes we have the same work as Year 5s [ . . . ] Depending on what class you are in some of us did it last year, but I haven't had that much more work than I have done before, not that I can remember anyway.

**Child 5:** I think it's quite good that we get the same as Year 5 because we can understand it and sometimes the Year 5s can't. You can help them to work out the answer.

#### **Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Another issue considered teacher facilitation of work. The sample children highlighted concerns that their teacher controlled the level of work set and some children did not always recognise the challenges presented. Children equated challenge with curriculum decisions made by the teacher.

In contrast, the children sampled in Case 2 identified their teacher's role as teaching learning techniques to access assessments and texts. The children spoke of pressures associated with accessing oral language within lessons. For example, whilst listening to stories during carpet time, the children could not always understand spoken words. They did not have the confidence to request definitions or the understanding to know when to break the flow of the text. Therefore, the challenge was not associated with whole-class and group activities as discussed in Case 1, but was to define words immediately during dialogue exchange.

**Child 5:** When you sit on the carpet [teacher] uses words that you don't understand, but may have heard of them and in the end we don't have the courage to ask, so someone will put up their hand and go 'what does that mean' and we're all literally just sat there like that **(pulling a face)**.

**Child 2:** This is really funny, [teacher] will say things like 'you all just sit there confused and I'll ask you' . . . and we all just sit there.

**Child 3:** One of the words was 'amiably' and I don't even know what that means.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 2 student voice activity

### **5.3.3 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)**

The impact of SATs on the Year 6 children's learning was analysed using distinctions of pre-SATs, actual assessment and post-SATs. All three cases identified commonalities in the children's SATs experience. These focused on sitting the external tests, and curriculum provision post-SATs. Table 5.2(b) presents the main discussion findings. Pre- and post-SATs activities provoked greater comparative challenges to

learning and classroom relationships. The three cases detailed unique experiences associated with preparation and the children's learning journey. However, each journey developed differing barriers to learning that concluded with increased anxiety for all participants and greater perceived challenges in transition.

Despite Case 1 evaluating SATs as a 'positive learning experience', pressures arose from individuals' and caregivers' expectations. For some children, these were set higher than the child's school target. The sample children from Case 2 classified SATs as a tool that developed new learning relationships with caregivers. Children identified this shared knowledge as a positive development for dyadic understanding of their learning, with caregivers taking a positive role within it.

**Child 2:** The other thing is you're scared about what your parents are gonna think if you don't do really well, that's straightaway what shot into my mind, I don't think I really care about . . . I do care, but I didn't care as much [as] about what my Mum and Dad think, if I came home with the wrong grade. I don't mean they would be angry with me, but the fact is I expected more from myself.

#### **Case 2: Phase 2 student voice activity**

Preliminary investigations highlighted specific support for caregivers during the transition year. This involved workshops for caregivers detailing the purpose and procedures of SATs. More importantly, they offered advice on how to support children through the process, with literacy and numeracy provision to contribute actively in their child's learning journey. Cases 1 and 2 developed triadic processes between child, caregiver and teacher to support sample children. Thus, the role of teacher changed from educating children to educating both children and caregivers. In the preliminary investigation, the professional stakeholders detailed the relationship between child and teacher as a two-way process. Their role with parents was to provide information, thus a one-way process. However, the sample children boosted the triad by identifying that SATs fostered dialogue with parents both academically and emotionally. Evidence claimed that the focus of this was the importance of SATs, rather than the importance of transition.

Case 3 did not link SATs with home, but used the process to highlight differing learning relationships with their teachers. In contrast to Case 1 where teachers spoke very little of tests, Cases 2 and 3 spoke of the continual changing behaviours of teachers influencing the pressures on children's learning and affecting the classroom environment. They reflected on acute changes in the mesosystems and microsystems of learning. Case 3 identified three affected areas. The first described the mesosystem in which their timetable continually changed. As SATs drew nearer, creative and 'fun' work decreased.

Further literacy and numeracy lessons gradually replaced foundation subjects. Children received up to two extended literacy lessons per day.

**Child 7:** Teachers were saying '[SATs] are going to be really hard, but it's quite easy.'

**Researcher:** Did you feel prepared for your SATs?

**All:** Yes.

**Child 4:** We have two lessons a day really with, literacy in the morning and sometimes we have literacy in the afternoon as well.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Secondly, teachers worked with greater urgency and continually changed their working methods to ensure children had retained knowledge. Children spoke of lessons having more pace with greater focus. Thirdly, in order to reach individual targets, all children had to access higher-mark questions. This impinged on pre-existing microsystems with changed hierarchy of child to teacher. Such a change influenced the language developed, with children having to rehearse and retain new language systems to access high-order questions. The sample children concluded that to access SATs, all three areas were necessary to ensure changed working habits.

**Child 4: (Discussion of SATs preparation)** You have to do this, you have to do that.

**Child 7:** The way [teacher] was talking about it about high-mark questions . . . we had a couple of 3-mark questions, but most of them were 2-mark and 1-mark [ . . . ] When we did our revision it was a bit like thinking about what we've done all year and last week-end as well. We done like maths where we had to do a lot.

**Child 4:** . . . before SATs . . . we had to take it all in. There were like seven things we had to learn before the SATs and there are a lot of difficult words.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Case 2 and Case 3 children discussed similar experiences. The children identified a restricted curriculum pre-SATs and development of new language skills to access test papers. However, their interpretation suggested that the changed behaviours of their teacher had the greatest impact on their learning. The children defined SATs as a 'burden' to all participants and placing 'unnecessary stresses' on their teacher.

After the testing period, all sample children spoke of a metamorphosis within their learning environments. They characterised their teachers as 'less stressed' and able to deliver a more exciting curriculum. Case 1 spoke of more unstructured time and less emphasis placed on homework. However, they concluded that losing routines so early

within their transition year caused greater anxiety for transfer. Case 3 defined a 'relaxed' approach to learning. Child 7 claimed that 'what took one hour to learn, now takes two.' The sample children did not view this as detrimental to their transition, but enjoyed a substantial break prior to their transfer. However, Case 2 maintained the existing level of work using a more creative approach to their curriculum. The sample children described their teachers as delivering more complex, 'Level 6' work to prepare them for Year 7. However, SATs papers did not now dictate lessons. The children discussed using brainteasers to develop algebraic skills and Murder Mysteries contributing to literacy.

#### **5.3.4 Transition programme evaluation**

There were no convincing similarities of subthemes in transition programme evaluation across the three cases. All children spoke of limited transition work developed inside the classroom, but there was little recognition of any sustainable programmes in place. The sample children representing Case 2 did not perceive the relevance of transition work, as they already had experience of their new school building and older peers housed within it. Despite positive experiences with recent induction day workshops, anxiety emerged from minimal transfer work undertaken in Year 6 accompanied by few visits into secondary-style classrooms. Only 2% of comments recorded by the sample children in Case 3 detailed formal transition work. However, these children showed a particular realisation of myths associated with transfer. Some comments related to building size and stories heard from older peers. These had little substance within the analysis, as the children could not give relevant examples.

Case 1 highlighted anxieties associated with minimal transition work. The sample children had developed some knowledge of the learning and social routines that their secondary school offered. This was mainly through stories from older children and their own caregivers. However, the sample children felt ready for change and advancing their learning journeys. The student voice activity took place a few days prior to the sample children's two induction days. The lack of information from their teachers and transfer school caused apprehension. Children did not know what equipment to take, whether to wear uniform, or initial travel and meeting arrangements. Lack of knowledge caused greater anxiety than stories heard.

**Researcher:** Would you like more information about next week?

**Child 3:** It's going to be a surprise kind of thing.

**Child 5:** I'd like to know what lessons I'll be doing [ . . . ] if I need a pencil case my mum won't be able to get one this weekend.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Across all cases, the sample children suggested transition arrangements required improvements. These included more visits to transfer schools; more information for induction days that allowed time for preparation; and a greater use of post-SATs time to formalise induction programmes.

### **5.3.5 Expectations of Year 7**

Due to its location, Case 2 had a greater awareness of Year 7. However, all sample children, across the three cases, relied on teacher perception to guide their thoughts on Year 7. Children felt ready for the new challenges Year 7 would offer and spoke of the need for new learning opportunities post-SATs. In contrast to Case 2, the sample children of Cases 1 and 3 expressed concern about sustainable progression and transfer of knowledge. Case 1 spoke of apprehension associated with the stilted learning opportunities offered post-SATs. They requested further learning 'excitement' that would introduce requirements for Year 7. The request for further homework was also noted. These children could only imagine the expectations of Year 7, and this minimised the impact of the transition opportunities offered. In comparison, Case 3 enjoyed more 'relaxation' in the opportunities offered to them post-SATs. However, subthemes of anxiety emerged as the sample children discussed the need for new curriculum challenges and transfer of knowledge into their transfer school. The time between SATs and Year 7 was too great and children were concerned that they would forget knowledge already learnt.

**Researcher:** Do you think work is going to be more demanding in Year 7?

**Child 4:** Of course, because we're more relaxed now aren't we? 'Cos when we go back in September is gonna be work, work, work.

**Researcher:** Do you think the gap is too big from SATs to your Year 7?

**Child 4:** Yes . . . No it's good.

**Researcher:** Why did you say yes? Would you like to do more work that gets your brain thinking?

**Child 7:** Yes.

**Child 4:** We have proper laughs now and if we get more work people are going to get moanier and now we've finished our SATs it's time for us to enjoy our Year 6.

**Child 7:** We need to carry on learning, but also to enjoy everything.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

Based on their expectations, Case 1 had minimal knowledge of secondary education. The children had received guidance on organisational skills associated with homework from their teachers. However, there was no experience offered for the children to begin to visualise learning routines associated with their new classrooms. Analysis of the preliminary investigation concluded that teachers had limited or even no teaching or observation experience of Year 7. As a result, the sample children's anxiety of Year 7 increased due to teacher inexperience and perception. The analysis concluded that primary school teachers alone cannot provide children with a holistic view of transition. Children's expectations that are based on imagination will feed apprehension, rather than resolve issues. Throughout the student voice activity, children spoke of mutual trust between all participants. However, 'trust' did result in inconsistency of provision between individual professional participants with each having their own transition story to tell.

#### **5.3.6 Lesson observations**

Observed lessons from each case developed an increased understanding of learning relationships within the mesosystem of the classroom and subsystems of interaction. Each lesson identified characteristics of developing learning identity through the analysis of dialogue and language for learning. Analysis detailed two emergent themes of participation in learning talk and question analysis; and language to support participation. The first considered interactions of participants to select language tools to enhance understanding of concepts. The second focused on utilising these tools to aid participation within established microsystems. Table 5.4 documents learning objectives and task sequences for each lesson.



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### Learning Objective (LO) and Lesson Sequence

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<b>Case 1</b>	<p><b>LO:</b> To understand business planning and costing (In for a penny, in for a pound)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children entered the classroom, collected their work folder and necessary resources. The teacher introduced the lesson and possible directions for each individual group project. The teacher revisited terminology by question and answer sequences that focused on definitions and class discussion. Each group developed a work plan and schedule for the lesson.</li> <li>2. Open-ended group task: each group planned cost and discussed ideas. Its focus was to create a costing plan.</li> <li>3. At the end of the lesson children put away resources.</li> </ol>
<b>Case 2</b>	<p><b>LO:</b> To use descriptive language to re-write a traditional fairy tale (Cinderella)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children entered the classroom and sat on the carpeted area. The teacher led a question and answer discussion evaluating where the children were up to in re-writing Cinderella. Children shared ideas using prompts from the teacher.</li> <li>2. Paired activity: children discussed their stories and possible developments with a partner using prompts learnt from teacher.</li> <li>3. Circle activity: children shared their stories as a class and used key phrases acknowledged by the teacher.</li> <li>4. Individual activity: children relocated to the desk area and continued re-writing Cinderella in their exercise books.</li> <li>5. Thinking break: children shared their paragraph with a partner and discussed possible developments.</li> <li>6. Children completed their paragraph and tidied away.</li> </ol>
<b>Case 3</b>	<p><b>LO:</b> Use key art words to appraise photographs critically</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children entered the ICT room and sat in an established seating plan. The teacher recapped on their previous lesson and activities, detailing photographs taken by the children on a recent school trip.</li> <li>2. Task set with timing: the task was to create a PowerPoint presentation using their photographs from a recent school trip. Children needed to select images and appraise them using keywords relating to tone, colour, texture and shape. Teachers informed the children that they would present their work to the class.</li> <li>3. Two groups gave presentations followed by extension/discussion questions modelled by the teachers and some class members.</li> <li>4. Task: continued development of the children's PowerPoint presentations.</li> <li>5. Two further presentations given with a discussion/appraisal session led by the children.</li> </ol>

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**Table 5.4:** Phase 2 – Observed lesson outlines

Case 1	Case 2	Case 2
<b>Theme 1:</b> Participation of learning talk and question analysis		
<b>% of coded comments:</b> <b>Open questions:</b> 34% <b>Closed questions:</b> 66%	<b>Open questions:</b> 54% <b>Closed questions:</b> 46%	<b>(T1) Open questions:</b> 66% <b>Closed questions:</b> 34% <b>(T2) Open questions:</b> 58% <b>Closed questions:</b> 42%
<b>Distribution of learning talk:</b> <b>Teacher 1:</b> 69% <b>Teacher 2:</b> N/A <b>Child:</b> 31%	<b>Teacher 1:</b> 83% <b>Teacher 2:</b> N/A <b>Child:</b> 17%	<b>Teacher 1:</b> 37% <b>Teacher 2:</b> 27% <b>Child:</b> 36%
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of questions asked promoted further understanding of the learning objectives.</li> <li>Questions clarified understanding of key concepts of knowledge. Children mostly answered verbatim, concluding in limited whole-class discussion.</li> <li>Teachers continually used cycles of instructional dialogue and evaluation. Each informed the other to ensure effective task progression and understanding.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
The teacher used questions to prompt whole-class discussion and promote further understanding of the task set.	The teacher used repeated question cycles to explore and confirm ideas throughout the opening carpet activity.	The teachers continually used subject specific language to ensure understanding and internalisation of key vocabulary.
Other questions gave definitions of subject-specific words.	The teacher used questions to clarify children's ideas.	Teachers used simple questions to generate ideas for the task. This allowed children to have ownership of their work and to develop confidence to progress their work further.
The teacher initiated discussion using Socratic-style dialogue. When contributions became confused, the teacher reverted to <i>magistral</i> dialogue.	By minimising enquiry skills, the teacher did not provoke further understanding of ideas associated with the set task. Thus, children became passive in their learning experience.	Teachers used open questions to generate peer discussion during group activities. During group work, questions were between teacher and child, not between peers.
The teacher continually replaced 'we' by using the term 'you.' This interchange gave the teacher control of discursive elements by navigating the children through each activity.	The teacher balanced question with instruction. Prior to the children embarking on the task, the teacher used questions to check for understanding.	
During group activity, the children used previous knowledge to make informed decisions about their work.	Throughout the lesson, children were dependent on the teacher structuring and articulating their ideas for the story. However, children could confidently express independent ideas to progress their storylines.	Peer-directed dialogue resulted in taking turns well. There was no evidence of language hierarchy within the working groups.

**Table 5.5(a):** Phase 2 – Participation of learning talk and question analysis

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2: Language to support learning participation</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One defined language category could not exist without the other. Each category continually overlapped during whole-class and group activities.</li> <li>All teachers' dominant language categories were those of instruction, task progression and giving advice.</li> <li>Children's dominant language category was that of task progression. There was little instruction or giving of advice during peer group work.</li> <li>All teachers started their lesson at the front of the classroom to introduce the learning objective and initial information for the lesson. They then circulated continuously around the classroom during group activities.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
During whole-class activities children were unable to problem-solve without controlled instructive dialogue from the teacher. There was little evidence of child-initiated learning as the teacher continually detailed routines and controlled potentially independent outcomes.	There was an expectation that knowledge and understanding developed during the opening carpet activity would transfer into table groups later within the lesson. The children successfully used prior understanding to complete key points to their story.	Teachers facilitated learning within groups using open statements to which children could actively respond. The lesson was continually interactive between teacher and child groups.
At times, the intensity and pace of teacher dialogue was too overwhelming for the children to access.	The teacher initiated progressive responses from peer discussion using an initial stimulus.	At the start of dialogue sequences, the initiator spoke short sentences. As exchanges developed and children grew in confidence, statements developed using conjunctions and evidence to support claims.
Children adapted their vocabulary to suit the needs of others in their group.	The teacher continually rehearsed skills with the children to develop discussion. The teacher used various stimuli to prompt this.	The task allowed children to be in control of their learning and decision-making. They used simple dialogue exchanges, which were sequentially 'stepped', rather than scaffold or modelled.
During group activity, there was evidence of peer scaffold using a cycle of instruction: model – evaluation – praise.	The teacher navigated child responses. There was little negotiation between children during carpet time and group activities.	The children continually rejected each other's ideas without citing evidence or reasons. This gave non-hierarchical structures to group work.
Throughout the open-ended task, the teacher continually brought the class together to explore certain group objective issues and to keep different groups focused.	The teacher continually explored descriptive vocabulary within whole-class and group activities.	Any support given to finalise concepts was by teachers, rather than peers.

**Table 5.5(b): Phase 2 – Language to support learning participation**

### 5.3.7 Participation of learning talk and questions analysis

In each observation, teachers used a range of dialogue techniques to introduce children to the learning expectations of whole-class and group activities. These ranged from tools relating to discussion-led activities, to instruction, exploration and evaluation. However, for some classes these had limited impact on the quality of work that emerged in relation to learning objectives. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) claimed a reduction in teacher-talk in classes they observed during the second ORACLE study. In two out of three cases in this study, teacher-talk amounted to a substantial part of the lesson: 69% of recorded dialogue in Case 1 was teacher-talk compared to 83% in Case 2. In preparing Case 1 for an open-ended group task, the teacher used one-third of lesson time to revisit past lessons and establish required learning sequences. The teacher combined Socratic dialogue to inform discussion, patterned with *magistral* language to navigate child choice. Thus, the teacher delivered exploration and instructions associated with the task by interchanging 'we' and 'you'.

#### (Opening teacher-led discussion on making profit)

**Teacher:** How much are we going to spend in total? What else do you need to know to work out your profit? [Child]?

**Child:** If you're going to buy it, how much it's going to cost.

**Teacher:** You need to know how much you're going to sell it for. Try to see how many people are going to buy it. It's really going to be very hard. I would suggest that you work out your profit on one item and then you can say 'if I sell 20 I would make . . . If I sell 40 I would make . . .'. So, work out what the unit cost is on one item so you need to know how much you're going to spend is, OK . . . leave that pen alone [child] . . . you need to know how much it's going to cost and how much you're going to sell it for, then you need to work out the difference. OK, making it clear that you're going to be sure how much you're going to make just for one item. So work out how many you're going to make OK, and work out how much it's going to cost, like we did the other day. So that's profit.

#### Case 1: Phase 2 lesson observation

In contrast, the teacher of Case 2 offered a similar introduction, but kept the dialogue focused on the task set. The teacher gave a short synopsis of children's work to date. Children then contributed different locations for their party (in the story). Throughout the lesson the teacher continually used Socratic structures and inclusive language such as 'we' and 'let's listen.' Although children contributed using short utterances, evidence suggested that they were active participants in discussions.

**Teacher:** So we did yesterday the first three paragraphs [ . . . ] So you've done in your story your Mother or the Father or somebody in your story has died and the Father or the Mother have re-married and you've got some evil step-brothers, or step-sisters, or step-robots, whatever. Your Cindy or Cindy-boy is being treated badly and has to do all the housework, or all the work in the factory, or all the work in the robot works, or all the work in the football ground, or whatever it is that you are

doing. In your second paragraph an invitation arrives. Let's listen to some of the invitations you have had.

**(Sequence of children giving the location of their party)**

**Case 2:** Phase 2 lesson observation.

There was minimal introduction to Case 3's lesson. Teachers continually used language associated with the task by modelling the use of keywords. Throughout the lesson, they navigated children to answer their own queries. Leading children through a structured thought process evoked confident responses and ownership of their work. Despite responses being short, task success was ensured by teachers' modelling language.

**Teacher:** Let's have a look. Why do you like that one?

**Child:** I don't like it.

**Teacher:** Why not?

**Child:** Shapes

**Teacher:** There are nice shapes in it. It's a nice contrast.

**Boy:** Oh well. The shapes look the same.

**Teacher:** The shapes, OK. Well what about the background colour and how it contrasts the shapes?

**Boy:** It's white. Do you think it contrasts it?

**Teacher:** What does that show?

**Boy: (no answer)**

**Teacher:** What colour's the background?

**Boy:** It's white.

**Teacher:** And what colour's the main picture?

**Boy:** Black

**Teacher:** So what does that show?

**Boy:** The colours

**Teacher:** So black and white, the colours, the shapes, shows what?

**(Boy shrugs shoulders)**

**Teacher:** Think about a television. If we were to control the brightness, we can control the brightness . . . where you would control the how the colours are put together.

**Boy:** Contrast!

**Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Each case offered unique methods of teachers structuring language to inform the discussion of set tasks. However, Case 2 and Case 3 demonstrated children having greater dependency on their teacher than Case 1. Independence equated to confidence in learning and independent access to the correct vocabulary for each task. The teacher of Case 1 instigated continuous monologue through which children had to follow concepts. The teacher checked for understanding using 'hands down' questioning. Amongst the speech recorded, there was a series of short unanswered questions asked by the teacher. This prompted definitions that modelled accurate use of vocabulary. Case 2 developed sequences of discussion whereby the teacher verified children's answers before proceeding with the next question. Unlike Case 1, children were not required to define language, but to use it in the context of their stories. Case 3 offered simple 'stepped' questions that constructed a child's understanding of key concepts associated with vocabulary developed within the learning objectives. Individually focused questions prompted dyadic discussions

that were teacher-led. However, despite these differences, the perceived dependency generated by learning talk and questioning was innately constructed. Participation developed from a hierarchical dyadic relationship between teacher and child. This forged microsystem conveyed meaning for a child to learn successfully in other independent systems identified by group work. Yet, evidence from the lesson observations concluded that children had difficulty transferring vocabulary and learning skills from a whole-class situation into independent group work.

### 5.3.8 Language to support learning participation

Effective task progression within a lesson involves children transferring concepts into the various situations in which they participate. Children were observed working in whole-class and small group situations applying and exploring the knowledge associated with each. Their interpretation and use of language influenced progress and quality of work. In small groups, teacher roles changed from instructor to facilitator of knowledge with continual circulation between each group. However, the teachers' influence on learning contrasted between cases. Case 1 developed from an intense sequence of teacher dialogue at the start of the lesson, and for some children this was overwhelming. Once settled into groups, children identified with their task and conformed into working roles. The teacher used direct language that controlled smaller learning environments. At times, this destabilised a group by shifting hierarchy from child to teacher and back to child again. Prior to the teacher visiting a group, there was evidence of effective learning peer relations.

**(Table 2 without teacher. Analysing graphs for their product)**

**Boy 1:** OK. So we need to . . . this shows how much . . . write it just here. **(Shows Boy 2 where to write the sentence on the paper)** This shows that most children think that this one's really good.

**Boy 2:** That most people . . .

**Boy 1:** Yes, that's right.[ . . . ] **(Checking graphs between Boy 1 and Boy 2)**

**Boy 1:** OK, this shows . . . **(Passes graph to Boy 2)** This shows that most people would like our product at lunchtime. **(Points to area on the page where Boy 2 needs to write)**

**Boy 2:** Oh yeah, I needed to write that.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

In this short exchange, Boy 1 supported Boy 2 and guided him through an individual task. Boy 1 opened the exchange using 'we' and demonstrated work required. He adapted language presented by the teacher to ensure successful completion. This exchange demonstrated mutual language systems whereby Boy 1 facilitated his expectation of the task using non-controlling dialogue. Later in the lesson, their teacher visited the same group who were engaged in writing a letter.

**Teacher:** How's the letter coming on?

**Boy 1:** It's OK.

**Teacher:** Do you want me to have a quick read through? My school project in for a penny in for a pound. Think about where your title is [ . . . ] in for a penny in for a pound. Capital letters, OK?

This is a title. **(Teacher reading quietly the letter Boy 3 has written)**

Do you know how I would find it easier to read it? What makes it easier to read?

**Boy 1:** Make the writing bigger.

**Teacher:** That would help me because I haven't got my glasses on. If you had a book and it was just one long, long text . . .

**Boy 1:** A paragraph.

**Teacher:** Right, a paragraph. OK. [ . . . ] You need to think about the structure of your letter. You need an introduction. OK. Why you're writing to them, 'We are writing to you because.' Use what you've learnt. We're in maths but it doesn't mean you can't use your English skills.

#### **Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

The teacher instantly negotiated membership into the group by generating a dialogue focused on the letter. By easing into the existing microsystem, the teacher continued to highlight issues with the letter using subject specific language to ensure understanding. There was no modelling of the letter, but suggestions were given using instructional language.

Analysis of Case 2 showed teacher-initiated language systems. During the opening carpet activity, children rehearsed dialogue cues to explore ideas. This was done by teacher-led focused questioning. Once in table groups, children attempted to use this model to develop and explore descriptive language in their written paragraphs. However, their teacher continually modelled ideas, giving initial language stimuli. Children did not transfer knowledge developed from the carpet into table groups. Case 3 combined dialogue routines from Cases 1 and 2. There was some evidence of children using language that supported each other's learning. Unlike Case 1, peers continually rejected ideas made by others and developed into child-controlling tasks, rather than teacher-control. However, as children grew in confidence using and rehearsing required vocabulary, there was limited sharing of short instructions for task completion.

**(The girls upload a photograph onto the computer screen)**

**Girl 1:** Make it smaller than that . . . look . . .

**Girl 2:** It looks good like that.

**(Continually changing the size of the photograph on the screen)**

**Girl 1:** I like the reflection.

**Girl 2:** The reflection is the same as the other one.

**Girl 1:** I still like it because of the contrast. Add a hyperlink then we could click it like that.

**Girl 2:** Let's leave it like that.

#### **Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation

A short discussion between the two girls used subject specific vocabulary to seek mutual clarification about the size and image of a photograph. Unlike the example of Case 1 where

Boy 1 supported Boy 2, there was no imbalance of knowledge between the two girls. As a result, they sought a positive outcome using limited discussion. Within this dyad there was no evidence suggesting hierarchy.

Developing language to support learning was case dependent. In Cases 1 and 3 children had the independence to transfer and control information presented by the teacher at the start of lesson. Using their ability to translate instruction and vocabularies, children approached work independently. Despite continual preparation and modelling by their teacher, Case 2 children did not have sufficient independence to access the necessary language skills to produce independent work. Within carpet group work, children engaged in dialogue by presenting ideas to others. This did not replicate itself in table group work. However, by the teacher initiating responses, Case 2 produced more progressive ideas than the other cases. The teacher did not negotiate, or force, membership into groups, but informally participated by interjecting ideas. The teacher would then move onto the next group, after securing discussion from the previous group.

### **5.3.9 Independent learning activity: constructing a raft**

The independent learning activity observed the sample children from each case working as an independent group to build a raft. Children had to make and agree decisions to ensure a successful outcome, with limited instructions to complete the required task. The activity was designed to ascertain whether children had the ability to transfer use of the language and learning strategies developed in their lessons into an informal learning environment. Each case produced a unique raft varying in its construction process and outcome. Table 5.6a documents the success of each prototype. Data fell into two themes that understood the child's use of complex language and ability to structure questions within discussion, and how the child used dialogue to influence and negotiate task progression. Tables 5.6a and 5.6b detail similarities and differences that the analysis offered.

### **5.3.10 Complexity of language used and question analysis**

Complexity of language categorised the sample children's ability to use conjunctions, decision processes, exploration and justification of ideas offered. It indicated children's ability to offer ideas that suggested reasoning and deepened the context of raft construction. Language complexities also defined a child's use of questions to enquire into



and understand further the presentation of ideas. Each case offered few examples of children using conjunctions to further contributions. Limited evidence of reasoning was recorded using 'if', 'so' or 'because.' However, differences between cases emerged with the sample children defining language systems that generated discussion and articulated thought processes. Case 1 continually used the term 'we' rather than 'you' or 'I' to clarify key concepts. This removed the individuality of the task and formed cohesive partnerships within the initial microsystem.

**Child 3:** Shall we have this for the first bit? **(Holding straws and pipe cleaners)**

**Child 1:** We can use the smaller straws as well.

**Child 2:** Shall we put this piece through here? **(Putting a pipe cleaner inside a straw)** So, we put this one there. Yes? How many shall we have? **(Marking the straws to be cut, making sure they are the same length)**

**Case 1:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

This example highlights collective suggestions with shared ownership. At the point where a direct instruction is given, 'we' turns into 'you.' Case 3 furthers this concept using the first person-plural until an instruction is given or a child disagrees with another.

**(Discussion about appropriate adhesive to secure resources to the deck)**

**Child 3:** We can sellotape it.

**Child 7:** Yeah, sellotape and stuff . . . what would be lighter though?

**Child 4:** What?

**Child 7:** What would be lighter, sellotape or glue?

**Child 3:** Sellotape.

**Child 4:** Sellotape would make it more secure.

**Child 3:** And this?

**Child 7:** And to use five things to make it, we could use stuff like pompoms to decorate it because they're not heavy, are they?

**Child 6:** Can I show you my way a minute?

**Child 4:** Yes, but he said we could use this for something **(picks up a fabric square).**

**Child 7:** Yes, that's what I mean like.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

In this example, children made random suggestions without participants controlling the presentation and reasoning within the group. Initial conflict occurred through the suggestion of batteries and an electric circuit to control the raft. This led to further suggestions of constructing a path and materials to cover the base. Throughout the exchange there were no conclusions that moved the task forward. As a result, two unified groups emerged at the start of the activity with independent language systems structuring recommendations. Children 1 to 4 formed one system with children 5 and 6 making the other. Throughout the activity, only Children 5 and 6 attempted to negotiate membership into the other subsystem. When denied, the children actively segregated themselves from the task.

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Quality of the final prototype:</b> The children constructed a good quality and secure raft. Unfortunately it did not float, however, it had excellent decorative features.		
The raft was unstable and did not float. Constructed from a single yoghurt pot, it had limited decoration, mainly fabric glued around the pot.		
The raft was excellent. Its construction was balanced and watertight resulting in it floating for a sustained period. Its decoration was colourful, with a range of accessories, including a pair of oars.		
<b>Theme 1: Complexity of language used and question analysis</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was limited evidence of the sample children's use of conjunctions to engage and support exploration of key concepts.</li> <li>There were few examples of children using complex language to support and debate a variety of concepts explored throughout the task.</li> <li>The children used questions to clarify, construct and evaluate ideas further.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
The sample children were confident as a collective group transferring skills and understanding. Child 1 offered greater challenge within the task. The child adopted characteristics portrayed by the class teacher.	Complex language used clarified key concepts. This did not provoke discussion associated with the task.	In contrast to the lesson observed, children had difficulties in evaluating decisions made by group members using complex language. There was limited reasoning of ideas offered.
There was some evidence of children seeking clarification of ideas. This was inconsistent throughout the task. Children used 'we' rather than 'you' or 'I' when giving instructions or concluding ideas.	During detailed discussion, questions asked identified thought processes and did not require answers or recognition. Children used questions to clarify ideas presented by other members of the group.	
Children used a variety of directed questions to seek task ownership. This effectively contributed to securing group relationships.	Questions often detailed reassurance of contributions and ideas.	Questions added pace and accountability of group members. There was a substantial increase of questions asked across the group. The range of questions supported understanding of the concept of raft construction.
	Questions were simplistic in structure requesting short or no answers. However, they significantly contributed to group working relationships and identification of roles.	Questions were essential tools in developing a reflective framework for the children to work. The recurring sequence was <i>reflection of idea – action – evaluation</i> . Child 7 operated within the wider context of each microsystem and supported other participants during each stage of construction. The child processed others' ideas before making decisions on the next stage of the project.

**Table 5.6(a):** Independent learning activity – language complexity and question analysis

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2: Task progression analysis</b>		
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sample children developed discrete roles according to their dominant language cluster. As the task progressed, dominant language clusters did not change or become duplicated by others. Adopted language roles have been categorised as 'advisor', 'leader', 'facilitator', 'resource technician', and 'worker'.</li> <li>Children worked in layers of overlapping microsystems contained within the main group of children. Each layer had a hierarchical structure. Therefore, each subsystem was extremely complex in understanding contributions made towards the task.</li> <li>Children actively sought membership within each layer. This was by negotiation and contribution of ideas.</li> <li>Microsystems were dyadic and triadic in structure. Not each was discrete, as Bronfenbrenner would suggest. They overlapped according to the nature of the contributions.</li> <li>Each subsystem produced language constraints when operating within another.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Children actively sought membership into each subsystem. They actively engaged in contributing to various aspects of the task. However, in some subsystems their dominant language role prohibited successful contributions. Child 2 had difficulty in negotiating roles and contributing to the group.	Evidence of conflict between dyadic groups as others negotiated membership within them. Except for the resource manager and advisor, children failed to renegotiate membership within dominant subsystems. As a result, there were two opposing subsystems operating within the group.	Children operated confidently in subsystems. However, some made fewer contributions whilst working within a whole group.
	As a whole group, there was explicit hierarchy within the overall structure. Unlike Cases 1 and 3 who agreed rules at the start of the task, Case 2 agreed rules as the task progressed.	
Child 5 continually responded to a series of requests from each member of the group. Responses made ensured that Child 5 operated within each layer of the microsystem.	The advisor used prior knowledge to inform decisions. Child 4 was detached from the group, giving advice to all formed partnerships.	Each subsystem produced language constraints in terms of defining subject-specific vocabulary and initiating ideas.
	Language clusters developed by dominant participants, not participant contribution.	Child 7 co-ordinated ideas and evaluated their contribution within the task. The advisor and contributing subsystem evaluated its impact.
	Negotiation did not decide decorative decisions, but decided on family/caregivers preference.	Children explored ideas by modelling them in drawings. This enabled structured discussion to take place.
		Children ignored contributions from certain members of the group, and so prevented exploration of important ideas.

**Table 5.6(b):** Independent learning activity – task progression analysis

**Child 4:** Oh look, batteries!

**Child 2:** We can make a boat out of . . . Are we allowed to use batteries? We can make something electrical?

**Child 6:** We won't be able to put it into the water then.

**Child 5:** [Child 2] put that in the middle then you can make a path. **(Holding strip of spaghetti)**

**Child 3:** That will soak up all the water.

**Child 6:** Yeah. [Child 3] is right, that will soak up all the water.

**Child 5:** Yeah, it will soak up all the water.

**Child 3:** No it won't, have you forgotten?

**Child 5:** Or put it in the bottom of the cup.

**Child 3:** NO, put it underneath so it will soak up and it will float. So then if all the water goes in there it will push it down.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Despite a conflict of ideas between subsystems in Case 2, the sample children used unanswered questions to trigger thought processes. This was similar to techniques analysed within their observed lesson. Questions asked were simplistic in structure, yet developed into essential tools for progression and understanding of the task. Case 1 had the ability to enquire about construction processes throughout the task. They used questions to seek clarification of ideas and ownership of individual contributions. In contrast to both these dialogue systems, Case 3 had a substantial increase of task-related questions to clarify key issues towards the end of the task. This allowed the group to evaluate and make minor amendments to their raft, ensuring that the prototype floated and was in good decorative order. The sample children had the ability to challenge ideas and offer solutions as a group, defining a cycle of reflection, evaluation and action. For Case 3 questions added pace and accountability to the contributions made.

#### **5.3.11 Task progression analysis**

Task progression analysis identified a sequence of three distinct phases. During the first, the sample children negotiated roles and explored design ideas. Stages of making followed, demonstrating how the children developed their ideas and how they resolved issues. The final phase evaluated and refined the raft. Sample groups worked through each phase with varying success. Initial planning and negotiation of rules contributed significantly to the success of the final product. Case 3 spent the longest time discussing initial concepts. They used available resources to draw their prototype, forming conclusions on raft structure and strength. Children innately developed complementary roles that allowed Child 7 to give construction advice using prior knowledge. Child 4 responded by developing questions to further understanding and clarification on behalf of the group. Interpreted ideas and instructions were distributed within the group.

**Child 7:** If we use your white board, we can get things done quicker. I thought we could make like a raft and we could use those yogurt pots (**draws diagram on white board**) to help it float. We could have one at the front, one in the middle to help its buoyancy, one at the end. You can use like the straws to help with the decking and get it going like that (**while talking, draws a diagram**).

**Child 4:** So what would it look like then?

**Child 7:** And then with the deck so the hole doesn't get through on the yogurt pots because it's got a hole in it, we could use waterproof stuff to help with its buoyancy . . .

**Child 4:** What like that (**points to the whiteboard**)?

**Child 7:** It would look like a raft

**Child 4:** A raft.

### **Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Case 1 and Case 2 also developed complementary roles ensuring completion of the task. However, Case 1 had little discussion at the start of the activity. Initial ideas, instantly acted upon, had no justification or purpose. Throughout the task, Case 1 wasted resources. Case 2 began with Child 4 offering advice, and other roles evolved as the initial microsystem divided into two discrete subsystems. At the start of the activity different dyads experimented independently. These only merged towards the end of the making phase. Initial rules were not implicit, yet in the final phase of the task, the subsystems merged and combined decorative ideas.

The sample groups' making stage had little variance. All the sample children contributed both independently and as a group to the raft construction. Each group developed partnerships that shared contributions. These were not discrete, but formed layers within the microsystem, with children moving actively between them. Language systems identified these. For example, each sample group had a member who predominantly sorted and distributed resources. Cases 1 and 3 pre-empted requirements for each partnership without being prompted to organise resources. However, Case 2 had children simultaneously requesting resources from Child 3 causing issues between partnerships.

### **(Trying to find the end of the sellotape)**

**Child 3:** I can't find the source.

**Child 1:** Have you got nails?

**Child 3:** We've all got nails.

**Child 4:** Let's put scissors over it.

**Child 6:** That's what I meant.

**Child 4:** But look at it, they won't overlap so it won't be equally balanced.

**Child 2:** One side will topple over so it needs to be cut there. Have you got any right-handed scissors by chance, Sir? There's a pair by the computer.

**Child 3:** What here?

**Child 4:** No there.

### **Case 2:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Child 3 was tasked with sorting the sellotape, whilst locating a right-handed pair of scissors to cut other resources. Other sample children continued to develop their own ideas with an expectation that equipment would be to hand. Due to insufficient planning and discussion at the start of the activity, the making phase proved problematic, especially for Child 3.

On evaluating their raft, Case 1 identified issues concerning its buoyancy. As a result, the sample children changed its structure to a sealed container. After a short discussion led by Child 1, instructions were given to participants ensuring its reconstruction. Child 1 worked with each identified task, refining detail and understanding. Case 3 identified an issue with their raft's balance on the water. To resolve this issue, Child 7 independently constructed oars. Case 2 offered little evaluation and used the final phase to enhance decoration. In addition, Case 2 gave little thought to the success of their raft's construction. As a result, this was the least successful.

#### **5.3.12 Summary of phase 2**

The analysis of Phase 2 disclosed similarities and differences in the three sample groups' transition year. In particular, Phase 2 highlighted expectations of the child and Year 6 teacher in preparation for transfer. The student voice activity discussed inconsistency of provision. This included:

- the sample children's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the entire transition year;
- the impact of testing on a child's learning

The lesson observations considered learning behaviours and language within a formal context. It explored teacher influence on learning microsystems, in particular, the teacher's 'effect' on language and development of peer understanding. In comparison to data retrieved from lesson observations, the independent learning activity demonstrated:

- children had the ability to use language and skills developed in their classroom to solve problems independently;
- the importance of language on a child's learning development and transition experience.

Chapter 6 further explores how children work within discrete language clusters to support learning. It determines whether these are innate or learnt within learning microsystems.

#### **5.4 Phase 3: introduction to the transfer school**

Phase 3 gathered data from the sample children as they entered their transfer school. Its purpose was to understand the children's adaptation from primary to secondary school. Using identical methods to Phase 2, understanding of the children's learning and emotional progression was deepened. Phase 3 offered a comparative analysis with Phase 2, and identified acute changes as the sample children moved from a consistent mesosystem of their primary education to a collection of systems presented by their transfer school. Each offered disjointed subsystems in which a child would be required to participate and learn social outcomes. Phase 3 developed understanding of how, and if, children successfully transfer knowledge from one context into another, and explored the barriers faced during the process. The student voice activity provided reflections on the sample children's Year 6 and start of Year 7. Recorded lesson observations compared two systems of teaching: the first within a mainstream class, and the second for children with identified needs. Analysis of data considered differences in teacher pedagogies and teacher-child language. Finally, the independent learning activity analysed the sample children's possible changing behaviours and dialogue to ensure successful completion of the required task.

##### **5.4.1 Student voice activity**

Student voice activities occurred during the second month of the sample children's transfer to secondary school. The purpose of the activity was to provide an opportunity for the sample to reflect on their transition experiences. However, four distinct themes emerged that were similar to Phase 2. The themes were the children's Year 6 experience including their transition programme; SATs; reflection and evaluation of the start of Year 7; and changing academic language. Tables 5.6a to 5.6d detail analytical similarities and differences of each case.

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 1:</b> Reflection of Year 6 including the transition programme from primary to secondary school		
<b>% of counted coded statements</b>		
15% positive comments vs 7% negative	18% positive comments vs 12% negative	15% positive comments vs 15% negative
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sample children spoke highly of their Year 6 teachers concluding they were a good influence on their learning development.</li> <li>Children did not feel prepared for secondary school provision until the start of Year 7.</li> <li>During Year 6, there were inconsistent classroom routines, sanctions and setting of homework. This increased the 'shock' of starting Year 7.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Children had mixed feelings about their transition programme. They did not feel prepared for Year 7 until the penultimate day of Year 6 and would have benefitted from more transition discussion throughout Year 6; more time to introduce new tutor group friendships and travel partners; and a week post-SATs to focus solely on transition.	Prior to Year 7, children detailed their transition programme for learning, and perceived Year 7 sanctions and their work becoming gradually more difficult. The children spoke of their Year 6 teachers needing to push them harder and give greater challenge to learning.	Except for the 'Moving On' summer school programme, there was very little transition experience offered in Year 6. Children spoke of teacher exaggerations of life within a secondary school. Year 6 teachers gave very little input into transition.
In Year 6, the sample children would have benefitted from greater experience and explanation of routines and consistent sanctions.	Despite feeling unprepared for Year 7 at the end of Year 6, the children outlined excellent experiences of their extended transition programme at the start of their Year 7. This included the 'Moving On' summer school.	Year 6 provision centred on literacy and numeracy, with little informed reference to other subject areas. This created a further barrier to learning in Year 7 as their entire cohort had not experienced the same level of learning.
	There was a limited curriculum offered in Year 6. Children equated greater difficulty of work with greater challenge in learning. They did not equate the quality of teaching to this equation. However, the children believed inconsistencies of learning in Years 6 and 7 were teacher-dependent and not generated by them as learners. Children also equated their Year 6 teachers' good sense of humour to developing barriers to their learning experience.	Children spoke of a 'humanised' experience of learning with their Year 6 teachers. There was some expression of fondness towards their teachers, but attachments strengthened by a successful learning experience. Children compared non-attached relationships with Year 7 teachers, as there were too many. However, they detailed an imbalance of attachments within all microsystems as teachers 'controlled classroom routines, humour and learning.'
Children spoke highly of secure friendships formed in Year 6. However, only 50% kept solely to their primary school friends in Year 7. Year 6 friendships were good influences on learning. Children shared concepts and supported each other's learning.		

**Table 5.7(a):** Phase 3 – Student voice activity: reflections of Year 6 including the transition programme from primary to secondary school



Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2: Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)</b>		
<b>% of counted coded statements</b>		
4% positive comments vs 10% negative	4% positive comments vs 3% negative	2% positive comments vs 10% negative
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SATs took up too much learning time in Year 6 and became the 'core' of learning development.</li> <li>The sample children gave negative responses to the impact of SATs on learning on Year 6.</li> <li>Post SATs offered very few learning opportunities. Children did not recognise the broader and creative curriculum offered.</li> <li>Too much time between the sitting of SATs and the start of Year 7 increased anxiety about transition.</li> <li>Children found the tests easier than anticipated, with some managing to 'second guess' answers. They spoke of having to sit tests at the start of Year 7 and viewed this as meaning that SATs were unimportant to their school career.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
SATs were no longer a learning entitlement, but a series of tests that did not contribute towards Year 7.	Children spoke of SATs preparing them successfully for Year 7, as Key Stage 3 would be further preparation for public examinations.	Children spoke of SATs only preparing them for mathematics in Year 7.
Children classified SATs as skills test, rather than testing knowledge. They achieved their targets by understanding examination techniques rather than what they had learnt.		
Children spoke of Year 7 teachers' dismissive attitudes towards SATs and their inconsistent interpretation of SATs results on their setting.		Teachers had misguided them about the difficulty and usefulness of SATs in Year 7. Teachers told the children SATs determined setting from Year 7 to Year 9, and contributed to GCSE results.
Children could not transfer successful learning in Year 6 to Year 7.	Children concluded that SATs restricted Year 6 curriculum time. The children did not study the breadth of subjects offered in Year 7, and, therefore, approached foundation subjects with limited understanding.	SATs offered very little challenge to learning, and minimised curriculum content.
	Children described SATs as 'continually disguising themselves' in all Year 6 curriculum provision.	

**Table 5.7(b):** Phase 3 – Student voice activity: Statutory Assessment Tests

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 3:</b> Reflection and evaluation of the start of Year 7		
<b>% of counted coded statements</b>		
24% positive comments vs 24% negative	22% positive comments vs 28% negative	36% positive comments vs 13% negative
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children defined the learning in Year 7 as being more subject-specific than that of Year 6.</li> <li>The range of teachers in Year 7 offered a greater challenge to learning. However, children recognised that the challenge situated itself in learning routines and a larger number of teachers with whom they had to acquaint themselves.</li> <li>Children spoke of the quality of teaching and of learning being better in the secondary classroom, due to subject specialisms and resources.</li> <li>Difficulties and organisation of homework developed into a recurring subtheme throughout Phase 3.</li> <li>Children spoke of discontinuities in learning between Year 6 and Year 7, particularly in the foundation subjects.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Children acknowledged better Year 7 learning engagement due to the amount of 'quality' support offered in the classroom.	Children defined Year 7 as a 'catch up' year due to the amount of new subjects they were learning. This afforded itself in 'exciting' challenges offered. Children enjoyed new and refreshing concepts of Year 7 during structured learning times.	Children spoke of their learning accelerating in Year 7 due to subject specialists teaching them. Learning improved due to improved resourcing and situated within specialist classrooms.
Being the youngest in the school was publicised by having to sit on the 'cold wooden floor' during assembly. In contrast, the children's Year 6 experience allowed them to sit on chairs.		Year 7 offered a distinct change from the classification of a child to student.
	Children spoke of mutual respect between teachers and children during structured and unstructured times.	Children categorised some teachers as 'moody' and others as 'good.' However, there were fewer moody teachers in Year 7.
	There was greater flexibility in movement around the school during unstructured times	Continual movement in and out of learning contexts provided regular change and condensed learning making it more accessible. There was greater flexibility in movement around the school during unstructured times.
Peers and older children had a detrimental effect on learning, due to poor attitudes and behaviours in and around the classroom. For example, older children 'nudged' and pushed Year 7s in the corridor. They also did not like older children calling Year 7s 'annoying.'		

**Table 5.7(c):** Phase 3 – Student voice activity: reflections and evaluation of the start of Year 7

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 4:</b> Use of academic language in Year 7		
<b>% of counted coded statements</b>		
3% positive comments vs 13% negative	1% positive comments vs 10% negative	5% positive comments vs 13% negative
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the start of Year 7 progress was hindered due to language constraints and children lacking confidence to ask teachers for definitions.</li> <li>Year 7 teachers used a wider range of subject-specific vocabulary than that in Year 6. Teachers did not make language definitions explicit to the sample children.</li> <li>As with Year 6, there was evidence of a lack of consistency with definitions and subject-specific vocabulary when being taught by more than one teacher in a specific curriculum area.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Children spoke of initial difficulties in their learning due to oral and written classroom language being too difficult to access.	Children spoke of being unable to transfer learning in a primary school classroom to a secondary school classroom. This was due to a primary teacher using 'little words' and a secondary teacher using 'fancy' inaccessible vocabulary.	Children concluded that there was too long a learning gap between SATs and the start of Year 7. As a result, they could not remember all the work completed in Year 6.
Teachers' expectations of language were inconsistent. The children spoke of teachers trying to impress by stating they used sixth-form language. One teacher wrote this on the board.	Teachers had higher expectations of oral and written language. However, the children felt that at times these were too high. Teachers had yet 'to teach' them how to access subject-specific language.	
Children evaluated two categories of teachers. The first did not promote independence and would always be writing work on the board. The second would use participatory language to encourage group activities. The children concluded that a mixture of both would complement a primary setting and accelerate their learning potential.	Children spoke of teachers having to teach them learning behaviours. One teacher taught them how to write notes, another how to remember word definitions.	When Year 7 teachers attempted to further their learning, the children had to guess definitions for key vocabularies.
		Children could not associate subject-specific vocabulary learnt in Year 6 to vocabulary learnt in Year 7.

**Table 5.7(d):** Phase 3 – Student voice activity: use of academic language in Year 7

### 5.4.2 Reflections of Year 6

All cases spoke happily of their experiences in Year 6 detailing similar thoughts to those in their Year 6 student voice activity. The sample children compared the quality of teaching and learning, friendships and their Year 6 provision to that experienced in Year 7. However, across all three cases there were differences in learning expectations and the role of the teacher within them. The sample children spoke fondly of their Year 6 teachers and enjoyed having a positive learning experience that injected humour, fun and enjoyment into their social learning. Contrasting definitions of 'formal' and 'academic' emerged, underpinning inconsistencies of learning provision. Despite Case 3 enjoying 'having a joke' with their Year 6 teacher, they spoke of having high expectations of themselves as learners, and this was not fulfilled in the mesosystem of primary school classroom life. To remove barriers to learning, the sample children required a strong bond created by learning, not fondness for their teacher. As a result, there were inconsistencies of attachment in teacher-pupil relationships, as their teacher controlled routines, humour and learning. This was compared to Year 7 where the sample children met at least ten teachers per week within discrete subject areas. As a result, there were too many teachers with whom to form attachments.

**Researcher:** Are the teachers different in Year 7?

**Child 4:** Yes. Not as moody and

**Child 7:** I think some of them can be moody, but all teachers can be moody at times. But you do not have to see them every single day and you can have some days where you can have a bigger range of teachers. [ . . . ] The teacher quality like here . . . instead of like not push you, they push you even more so you get the higher results. They just don't hang back and always go forward. [ . . . ]

**Researcher:** What helps you with your learning?

**Child 4:** I think co-operating with other students because like . . . and learning with the teacher. We can tell someone or ask someone how to do it.

**Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity

As in Phase 2, Case 2 identified humour between learners and their teachers as a barrier to learning. The sample children spoke of their Year 6 teacher needing to push them harder to increase the challenge within the mesosystem.

**Researcher:** If you were to give your Year 6 teacher one piece of advice, what would it be?

**Child 4:** Make lessons harder.

**Child 3:** Our teacher used to have a lot of jokes with us – but try not to make too many, because we need to take it more seriously.

**Child 5:** Give us a bit more harder work I suppose.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Year 6 provision highlighted subtle differences between cases. The sample children detailed inconsistencies with homework and sanctions. Case 1 spoke of an increased shock when starting Year 7 due to the amount of homework set and sanctions given for a range of misdemeanours. The children identified academic and social changes in Year 7 for which Year 6 did not prepare them. In Year 6, inconsistencies in the setting of homework and deployment of sanctions created barriers to children's learning routines. In addition, the children identified negative changes in pupil behaviours within their year group. Child 4 detailed Year 6 children as being 'friendly', and noting an increase of poor behaviour in Year 7; there was no reason why this should happen. This factor was a major reason why some children were unsettled in Year 7, and it developed into a persistent theme. Further reflection identified the impact and consequence of older pupil behaviour that escalated their anxiety. Section 5.4.4 develops this discussion. However, all sample children discussed consistencies with Year 7 sanctions and children recognised the ease of learning within dependable routines.

**Child 4:** Everyone in Year 6 is kind of friendly and is really nice. Yeah. The most a Year 6 will say is a mean word. In Year 7 there's a lot more than that.

**Child 2:** In Year 6 if you mess about you won't get a detention or you won't get an internal. But there's people in our class who have got an internal and loads of detentions.

[ . . . ]

**Researcher:** What advice would you now give to your Year 6 teachers?

**Child 4:** Probably just prepare the student a bit more. I think it should have been a bit tighter schedule as secondary school is, because it was a bit loose. The rules are not as firm I suppose, because they sometimes let you off. If you do something really naughty at secondary school they make you do litter picking or something. The teachers don't have to sit with you at break time because that would waste their time and they won't have their break, but then, if they had a litter picking, people are getting punished and teachers are still getting their break.

**Child 6:** I think what they should do is just start introducing gentle detentions, I'm not saying full scale hour detentions, [but] starting with 15 minutes and then half an hour if you do something like you've forgot your homework, not just 'Oh bring it in tomorrow' because that's not how it works at secondary school. If you don't do your homework or you have three lates you get detention and if you get three detentions you get isolation. Now we've had three boys in isolation. People have to get ready for it.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Case 2 also detailed disjointedness between the setting of homework and curriculum content between Year 6 and Year 7. Year 6 homework issues replicated Case 1. However, in Year 7 the setting of homework was still teacher-dependent. Year 6 sanctions gradually increased throughout the academic year and were issued by the class teacher. Year 7 sanctions covered a broader range of behaviours. Therefore, at the end of Year 6 the sample children did not feel prepared for Year 7, as they required greater challenges and stricter routines within their learning.

Each case had different experiences associated with the children's transition programme. Case 1 did not feel prepared for the transfer school until the penultimate day when the children's teachers organised travel bus partners to their transfer school. The sample children expressed the need for adjustments to the programme. These included more class discussion on transition throughout Year 6; more class time for induction day and travel preparation; and their last week of Year 6 to focus solely on transition. Case 3's Year 6 teachers provided very little preparation for the children's transfer. The children concluded that their Year 6 teachers gave an exaggerated perception of life in secondary schools. Teacher perceptions concerned secondary school routines, homework and curriculum provision including the purpose of SATs.

**Researcher:** Do you think your teachers and your primary school really prepared you for Year 7?  
[...]

**Child 7:** I think sometimes they could . . . sometimes they over-exaggerated by saying you must do this or otherwise you will not succeed and things like that.

**Child 4:** They did over-exaggerate a little bit because they kind of said things that didn't even happen here.

**Researcher:** Would you say they lied to you?

**Child 7:** Not lied, but over-exaggerated.

**Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Cases 2 and 3 detailed their transfer school's extended transition programme. This included 'Moving On,' a summer holiday scheme that focused on transfer arrangements and preparation for all Year 7 students. In addition to this, in the first month of transfer the children went on a residential trip. The extended programme eased emotional concerns associated with transfer and gave the children enjoyable experiences to build new learning friendships.

### 5.4.3 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)

In all three cases, perceptions of SATs changed from that of Phase 2. Phase 2 detailed pressures associated with external testing and the 'burden' it placed on mesosystems. Post-SATs time offered few learning opportunities. In Phase 3, the children removed the concept of burden, and negativity about SATs was broadened to include the impact it had on the children's learning. Case 1 defined the experience as testing examination 'skills' rather than gaining knowledge. It was no longer a learning entitlement, taking too much time in Year 6, but was the central thread of learning that did not contribute to Year 7. Case 3 suggested that SATs offered little challenge within a broad and balanced curriculum, as the tests were easier than anticipated. Case 2 continued the argument of

restricted curriculum time, suggesting that SATs continually disguised themselves in Year 6 provision. However, the sample children concluded that SATs suitably prepared them for Year 7, as Key Stage 3 would be further preparation for public examinations.

**Researcher:** Did they help you prepare for Year 7?

**Child 2:** Yes.

**Researcher:** How?

**Child 4:** Because in Year 6 I did really well in my maths so I thought SATs questions were fairly medium in rating them in hardness. So, in Year 7 I thought they would step up a level because I thought now they would start preparing us for like our GCSEs. I thought we would take the foundation in Year 9 so the teachers should teach us all the advanced stuff.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Case 3 continued to develop the notion of their teachers' misguided perceptions of Year 7. The sample children claimed that their teacher had exaggerated the difficulty of SATs and their usefulness to Year 7 teachers. Case 1 furthered this debate identifying their Year 7 teachers' dismissive attitudes towards SATs, and the little significance they had in the secondary school's interpretation of the sample children's results. This was further compounded, as all cases had to sit Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and some subject-specific tests on entry to their transfer school.

**Child 6:** In maths they don't really trust the SATs. They don't really like them. They re-test us. and because my school is different to the others they don't know what we've been taught, so they automatically assume we've done what they've done and we're doing quite a lot of the work that we've already done at the moment so it's quite boring. Now we've done a test I didn't do very well because they've really upped the game for us even though I'm in top set. [ . . . ]

**Researcher:** Was it worth sitting your SATs?

**Child 2:** My music teacher said, 'We've got a little test today, it's a bit like your SATs but it's called a music SAT' but that's about it really. [ . . . ]

**Child 6:** [Year 7 teachers] just go on about how inaccurate they are and you spend too much time preparing for them, when it should just test you there and then, but they need to see how much we've retained that and how much we've kept that because we had to learn all that.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

#### **5.4.4 Reflections of Year 7**

Subthemes emerged detailing mechanisms that supported and hindered learning at the start of the sample children's Year 7. Across all three cases, children enjoyed having a range of 'subject specialist' teachers and learning resources to support specialisms. They equated the increased number of teachers with greater learning challenges. Children had the ability to engage in new learning opportunities. Case 1 appreciated additional support from teachers, teaching assistants and peers. They spoke of subject-specific support and

engagement between all participants within the mesosystem. Case 3 observed that they had now moved from 'child' to 'student.' As students, the sample children were required to learn a wider range of subjects and claimed that their progress was accelerating in core subjects. Case 2 enjoyed the greater flexibility in structured and unstructured time their transfer school offered. Central to this was a mutual respect between teachers and students.

Contrasting issues arose between cases. Case 1 identified the effects of being the youngest within the school and their relationships with older children. The sample children did not like sitting on the 'cold wooden floor' during assemblies. Contributing to this was being 'nudged' in the corridor and being told that Year 7 students are 'annoying.' This intruded on the sample children's new learning opportunities.

**Child 1:** Yes, because sometimes people just look down on you and say that you're smaller. Sometimes being in Year 7 they just pick on you.

**Child 2:** [Students] jump on tables, and throw money and really scare you.

**Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity

In contrast, Case 2 enforced their Phase 1 statement of Year 7 being a 'catch up year.' The sample children acknowledged that there was a discontinuity of provision, particularly in foundation subjects. This was not associated with resourcing, but the Year 6 curriculum time devoted to literacy and numeracy. Children compared art and languages provision between Years 6 and 7. They questioned why they did not have the opportunity to use resources and specialist classrooms in the secondary part of the building to promote broader learning participation.

**Child 2:** We do art over here. In the primary we didn't really do any art, we just did like the normal bits, like maths, science and if we did do it, it would be just like a work sheet. But we didn't just do art or anything. When we came up here . . . but there it was just maths and science.

**Child 4:** They could've prepared us better by teaching us subjects that we do up here. We get taught science twice a week and Latin every other week. But in primary they never taught us Spanish apart from one occasion when the teacher from the secondary site came in for a couple of weeks and that's all.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

#### **5.4.5 Academic language in Year 7**

Initial analysis identified two concurrent subthemes differentiating progression of academic language from Year 6 to Year 7, and teacher-talk that contributed to language for learning. Each case had divergent issues associated with oral and written language. Case



3 disassociated language taught in Year 6 from their learning in Year 7. For example, during the observed lesson in Year 6, the sample children learnt specific vocabulary including the terms 'vibrant', 'tone' and 'colour'. Yet, in a Year 7 English class, the same children learnt descriptive words including 'vibrant' and 'colour'. The sample children could not transfer oral language developed in their primary context to their secondary context, or between subjects.

**Child 7:** In English they speak and use more descriptive words like 'vibrant' and 'colour' and things like that. [ . . . ]

**Researcher:** Could you have understood those words in Year 6?

**Child 4:** Yeah a bit [ . . . ] some words in Year 7 they . . . you can understand a bit more.

**Child 7:** Because it's a bit different in Year 7.

### **Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Case 2 compared 'little' words learnt in primary school to 'fancy' words in secondary. Replicating Case 3, the sample children spoke of their inability to transfer their learning experience from Year 6 to Year 7. However, the children identified expectations of their Year 6 teachers and pressures associated with delivering a curriculum for their SATs. They claimed that their Year 6 teachers would use smaller words 'throwing in' correct terminology every now and again. In Year 7 the sample children were immersed in subject-specific vocabulary. There was a need to teach new learning behaviours in Year 7 to access a broadened curriculum. The sample children related this concept to the development of oral and written understanding.

Case 1 and Case 3 associated hindrances in language progression to an overly long learning gap from SATs to starting Year 7. During this time, the children enjoyed relaxed and creative variations in their curriculum. However, for Case 1, this time of reduced pressure on learning and language development only increased anxiety about transition. The sample children acknowledged this as a potential barrier that had caused learning to recede, and initial lessons in Year 7 to be too complicated. They compared Year 7 teachers who delivered lessons using 'chalk and talk' to those who encouraged group work. The first approach did not promote independent participatory language, while the second allowed the sample children to participate actively in their new learning context. The children preferred group activity and related this to their primary experience. Case 1 believed that their Year 7 teachers were 'trying to impress' by using complicated teacher-talk. For some, this related to a teacher using sixth-form language and the children did not have the confidence to request definitions. Hence, learning became confused and did not progress.

**Child 5:** My [subject] teacher uses sixth-form language and we're expected to understand it.

**Child 2:** Like [Child 5] said they use sixth-form language and you're just sat there while they tell you something but you don't even know what the word means. You put your hand up and they say 'Put your hand down and get on with your work' and you don't really know. You have to ask a friend and your friend doesn't know and then you're just stuck.

**Child 5:** My [subject] teacher will write it like what she expects Year 7 to know and in brackets she'll write sixth-form language

#### **Case 1:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Cases 2 and 3 also concluded that their teachers furthered learning with a new vocabulary in which definitions were 'guessed.' Their transfer schools did not offer taught skills to access language understanding. Case 2 also detailed teachers having high expectations associated with language acquisition, which at times were 'too high.'

### **5.4.6 Lesson observations**

Data collection for lesson observations took place in the destination school of Case 2 and Case 3 with comparative observations of a Year 7 mathematics lesson and a mixed-ability drama lesson. Unfortunately, access was denied for the destination school representing Case 1. This did not restrict analysis as rich explanatory data were obtained for the other two cases. In Year 7, Case 3 merged into the experience of Case 2. Comparative data for Case 1 was collected through the student voice and independent learning activities. Conclusions gathered supported findings from the student voice activity. The destination school of Case 2 and Case 3 has developed a 'home curriculum' that caters for students who are unable to access their mainstream Key Stage 3 entitlement. The same teacher – who delivers mathematics, English, humanities and Personal, Social and Health Education – teaches 60% of their timetable. In addition, the children receive additional reading and literacy classes tailored to individual needs. The recorded home lesson was mathematics. Table 5.8 details learning sequences for each lesson.

The purpose of the lesson observations was to understand learning progression and retention from a primary to a secondary classroom. The student voice activity highlighted specific differences in how teachers delivered learning and the language used to ensure understandings of key concepts. Across all cases, children in their primary contexts had teachers who structured learning into manageable 'chunks' of time. Their mesosystem structures supported microsystems detailing a secure partnership and a fostering of confidence. Children were not innately dependent, but perceived systems were in place to support the transfer knowledge from a mesosystem into hierarchical structured subsystems led by teacher or peer. Learning objectives observed replicated programmes of study in

the children's primary school and there was little difference in the language used between teachers. Therefore, Phase 3 lesson observation analysis continued to develop identical thematic threads to Phase 2. The first thread analysed children's participation in learning and question analysis, and the second, language to support learning participation. Tables 5.9a and 5.9b provide case-by-case analysis.

Learning objective (LO) and lesson sequence	
<b>Drama (female teacher)</b>	<p><b>LO:</b> To understand and analyse key points within a story</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class entered the drama studio and sat on chairs in a circle. The class participated in an introductory game 'breaking the code.' The teacher was in role as the leader of a gang.</li> <li>2. Still within a circle, the class developed lines to construct a story. Each child had to contribute a story line to developing the plot. The teacher organised the introduction, middle section and ending. A teacher-led discussion based on the story's key points followed the previous activity.</li> <li>3. The children were put into groups of four. Each group received a key point from which to develop an improvisation.</li> <li>4. The class were organised into audience rows for the groups to perform their work. One group performed, followed by a teacher-led evaluation of their work.</li> </ol>
<b>Mathematics (male teacher)</b>	<p><b>LO:</b> To understand and apply fractions, decimals and percentages.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children entered the classroom and collected exercise books and writing equipment. A short starter activity was displayed on the interactive whiteboard.</li> <li>2. Children organised their test results into levels using their teacher's assessment system. They ensured all their answers were correctly marked.</li> <li>3. A whole-class board activity: as a class, children had to order fractions, decimals and percentages. Then they transferred the information into their exercise books.</li> <li>4. Children completed independent questions in their exercise books using strategies shared in the previous activity. The whole class checked answers.</li> <li>5. Further independent questions completed using red, orange and green sequenced questions. Children had to complete each series and have their work marked before commencing work on the next colour.</li> <li>6. Children cleared away their exercise books.</li> </ol>

**Table 5.8:** Phase 3 lesson outlines

Lesson 1	Lesson 2
<p><b>Drama lesson</b> Learning objective: to understand key points of a story.</p> <p><b>Theme 1:</b> Participation in learning talk and questions analysis</p> <p><b>% of coded comments:</b></p> <p><b>Open questions:</b> 41%   <b>Closed questions:</b> 59%</p> <p><b>Distribution of learning talk:</b> <b>Teacher:</b> 62%   <b>Children:</b> 38%</p> <p><b>Similarities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions acted as 'building blocks' to understand key concepts and tasks associated within the learning context of the lesson.</li> <li>• Main question categories were task-orientation, clarification (checking for understanding), and instructional dialogue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Differences:</b></p> <p>The teacher's initial questions were categorised as open, therefore initiating discussion. However, as the lesson progressed, more direct and closed questions dominated teacher learning-talk.</p> <p>Between tasks, the teacher used combinations of direct questions for children to answer, and sequences of closed questions that did not require answers.</p> <p>The teacher allowed children to present minimal recall of work from previous lessons when evaluating on-going tasks.</p>	<p><b>Home Curriculum lesson (Mathematics)</b> Learning objective: to understand decimals, fractions and percentages.</p> <p><b>Open questions:</b> 14%   <b>Closed questions:</b> 86%</p> <p><b>Teacher:</b> 80%   <b>Children:</b> 20%</p> <p>Initially, sequences of questions were closed, allowing one or two word utterances. Once children became confident with their answers, the teacher asked open questions to extract greater recall. This pattern was consistent throughout the lesson.</p> <p>Teacher-child sequences included definition of key concepts promoting rehearsal of complex language skills; once confident the child moved from 'I' to 'we' giving ownership of the newly gained knowledge; children then wrote answers in their exercise books.</p> <p>The teacher developed three categories of language: question, instruction and praise. Throughout the lesson, the teacher did not deviate from the learning objectives.</p>

**Table 5.9(a):** Phase 3 – Lesson observations: participation of learning talk and question analysis

Lesson 1	Lesson 2
<b>Theme 2:</b> Language to support learning participation	
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of teacher dialogue was instructional, with some advice associated with the development of learning objectives.</li> </ul>	
<b>Differences:</b>	
<p>The expectations were that children would use complex and organised language to produce, rehearse and perform a group improvisation. However, group language systems produced minimally complex cues, little progressive evaluation and children continually rehearsed opening sequences.</p>	<p>There was evidence of hierarchical structures within table groups. Layers of dominant microsystems were contained in table groups replicating teacher-language and -talk. Children used a regular patten of question, instruction and praise when the teacher delegated tasks to them, for example children marking books. Peer learning sequences imitated teacher-talk at the start of the lesson.</p>
<p>There was evidence of hierarchical microsystem layers within each working group. The teacher moved in and out of these whilst supporting each group in turn.</p>	
<p>Throughout the main activity of developing an improvisation, the teacher continually gave instruction. This removed the independent nature of group activities. To ensure the progression of the task, over 50% of groups were teacher-led, rather than child-initiated.</p>	<p>Evidence of mirrored patterns of dialogue and gesture between the teacher and boys founded secure attachments. This was not evident with female members who continually checked their answers with the teacher. Therefore, gender differences concluded in passive female learners and diminished dialogic enquiry.</p>
	<p>The lesson developed 'sequential blocks' of knowledge associated with the learning objectives.</p>

**Table 5.9(b):** Phase 3 – Lesson observations: Language to support learning participation

#### 5.4.7 Participation in learning talk and question analysis

The observed lessons were identical in structure. Teachers gave an extended introduction of the learning objectives and activity sequences. This was followed by a class task, further instruction and progressive group or independent work. At the end of the lesson, the teachers' evaluated knowledge and skills gained. However, despite similarities in structure, verbal content differed by varying proportions and also the quality of teacher- and student-led talk. Unlike lessons observed in Phase 2, teacher-talk did not deviate from learning objectives. Instead, patterns of dialogue emerged combining elements of question, instruction and praise.

**Teacher:** Basically what you're going to do now . . . what you're going to do now in groups of three is you are going to take the key points of these stories. You're going to take the key points; you're going to create a whole new one. Alright? So, for example, I need a group of four. Go on quickly get into a group of four. Get into groups of four for me please. OK, so brilliant. So who's in a group of four? Hands up. Guys are you in four? Are you in a four? Are you in a four? Right, you four, stand up please. OK. This group of four [name] I'm going to give them the key . . . one of the key points, and your key point is going to be that a monkey has to appear. I want you to create a whole scene, alright, where this monkey appears. It doesn't have to be in a loft because up there it doesn't say in the loft. We're just focusing on the middle and it doesn't say 'in the loft' does it?

**Drama lesson:** Phase 3 lesson observation

Within this example, the teacher used instruction to bridge a whole-class activity into group work. The teacher gave an initial instruction to children developing a story out of one key point. This was succeeded by a series of questions ensuring children moved into adequate groupings and the task was understood. The combination of instruction, question and praise checked all children had sufficient understanding of the task and key points for development in their groupings.

As the lesson developed, some children struggled to identify the purpose of the initial task. Groups limited their rehearsal time by continually repeating scenes they enjoyed, or seeking agreement of characterisations. As a result, there was limited evidence of language skills to move the set task forward. Despite using connectives to explore ideas, group structures developed internal microsystems that conflicted and prolonged any agreement made. Within the hierarchical structure, this example identified Boys 2 and 4 reasoning about who should act as the granny. This was not to progress with the task, but to ensure they would not have to participate in the actual role. Therefore, by participating within group subsystems, the children used alliance to secure confirmation of their ideas.

**(Discussion on distributing characters)**

**Boy 1: (imitating sound of a mouse; imitates movement of dagger)**

**Boy 2:** By the way I'm not being the old granny. He can be it.

**Boy 3:** No I'm not.

**Boy 2:** You can be the old granny because you're tall enough.

**Boy 4:** You can be the old granny because you're the one on the floor.

**Boy 2:** Miss, who can be the old granny?

**Boy 1:** I'll be the old granny then.

**Drama:** Phase 3 lesson observation

The 'home' mathematics lesson shared many characteristics of its primary school partner, including a substantial increase of teacher-talk that amounted to 80% of the lesson. The teacher increased dialogue sequences that focused on key words of percentages, decimals and fractions. Participation was encouraged using a range of strategies including inviting children up to the whiteboard to share work, using table groups for peer marking, and equating table groups to mathematical ability. Whilst marking others' work, children had the ability to offer praise confidently and to identify solutions for wrong answers.

**Boy 1:** There you go. That one's right and that one.

**Boy 2: (Ticks answers)** Have I got that one?

**Boy 1:** It should be 3.

**Boy 2: (Changes answer)**

**Boy 1:** That's right, that's right, that's right. Is that 0.75?

**Boy 2:** Yep

**Boy 1:** That's right, that's right. You've got them all right.

**Mathematics:** Phase 3 lesson observation

Apparent differences between these lessons were observed in the teacher's use of questioning. Initial analysis identified similarities between the mathematics lesson and the primary school lessons observed: 80% of questions were 'closed' allowing one or two utterances, with no strategies employed to develop peer discussion. These direct questions were primarily associated with task orientation and the teacher continually checking for understanding. As the lesson developed and children became more acquainted with using tools to explore the learning objectives, questions became 'open' offering opportunities to explore concepts relating to answers. There was a distinct shift of focus from 'what is' to 'how' and 'why'.

**Example of questioning at the start of the lesson:**

**Teacher:** So three lots of that added together, what's it going to be? So 0.25, that's one quarter and we're trying to find three quarters . . . add 0.25, add 0.25 is? Do that for me and you have the answer.

**Example of questioning towards the end of the lesson:**

**Teacher:** So you've correctly worked out 50%, so let's do the whole thing here which is £100 – you've correctly worked out that half of £100 is 50, yes? SO what's a quarter? What do we need to do to a half to get a quarter?

**Mathematics:** Phase 3 lesson observation

The drama lesson developed an opposite approach. At the start, questions were broad encouraging teacher-led discussion of initial tasks. However, children had minimal recall of how to develop stories and understand key points within them. The teacher reverted to direct and closed questions to build explanation and understanding. Sequences involved combinations of direct questions to be answered, or not.

**(Evaluating a performance)**

**Teacher:** What was the key point though? What if you took [it] out from the story, the story wouldn't be able to happen? . . . It's your opinion. What do you think? [Name] what bit of the story . . . what do you think? . . . If you took a bit out [of] the story what wouldn't happen?

**(No response from the class)**

**Drama:** Phase 3 lesson observation

Both observed lessons encouraged learning talk and questions between children and their teachers. The mathematics lesson identified the teacher as using *magistral* dialogue to ensure learning. Once children engaged in the understanding and use of key words, the teacher changed focus enabling a more open Socratic exchange between participants. Evidence suggested that once children became confident in solving mathematical problems, they not only shared their work with the class, but were also equipped to mark and praise others' work within their working microsystems. Therefore, by careful scaffolding, children were equipped to transfer work learnt within the mesosystem into independent microsystems. However, the drama lesson was a reversal of the mathematics class. The teacher initially encouraged discussion of story evaluation by using Socratic style dialogue at the start of the lesson. Drawing on the children's primary education experience, the expectation was that children could recall key points of a story. However, the children could not transfer this knowledge into their new context. The teacher adapted pedagogical tools to ensure that the concept was effectively re-taught. Evidence concluded that children could not transfer work learnt within the initial mesosystem to their working groups. As a result, conflict between subsystems emerged prohibiting development of ideas contributing to their improvisation.



#### 5.4.8 Language to support learning participation

The expectation of creating and refining a short improvisation in the drama lesson was based on the understanding that children had the ability to use complex and organised language. This notion was similar to that in the mathematics lesson. In drama, children did not use complex cues to sustain conversation, and, as a result, the group activity seemed to be 'stuck' on rehearsal regimes. Children presented ideas easily, but with no detailed evaluation, so ideas were not refined. The teacher allowed microsystems to develop through friendship groupings. The overarching role was then for the teacher to move between groups giving a temporary hierarchy to each in order to ensure the task progressed. The teacher's role was one of evaluator, to generate and structure ideas coherently. Therefore, with the independent nature of the task removed, children required scaffolding to ensure successful completion.

**Teacher:** Right. You need to walk in, off you go.

**(Boy 2 walks in and falls over)**

**Teacher:** [Boy 4] right you're next, in you go.

**(Boy 4 gets up and walks into the rehearsal area and pretends to knock on the door)**

**Teacher:** Stop smiling. You're not happy; you're annoyed because your gran's not in. Knock on the door and say 'Gran, where's the pocket money?'

**Boy 4:** Gran.

**Teacher:** Still no answer, get annoyed. **(Teacher in role: teenage 'strop', knocks three times)**  
Get annoyed.

**(Boy 5 knocks on door 3 times)**

**Teacher:** Kick the door. OK shout again.

**Boy 4:** Gran where's the pocket money?

**(Boy 6: does not move)**

**Teacher:** Has she died? Has she died? Quick, paramedic! **(Signals B1 to get off seat)** Quick! Come on!

**(Boy 7 gets out of seat and goes straight to B2)**

**Teacher:** Hang on; you've just walked straight through the wall of the building. You need to go to the door.

**Drama:** Phase 3 lesson observation

Unlike the drama teacher, the mathematics teacher built hierarchical relationships based on praise, as well as instructional dialogue. As discussed, the lesson provided structured building blocks to ensure successful learning outcomes and the language focused solely on the learning objectives. Towards the end of the lesson, child hierarchy within dependent microsystems mirrored teacher participation. Dominant relationships emerged between male participants, with females becoming passive contributors. This did not reflect conclusions found in any other observed lesson and independent learning activities. Girls continually checked their answers with their teacher and did not explore

solutions with peers situated in their table groups. As a result, boys made greater progress within the lesson.

**(Teacher leading work from the front of the classroom)**

**Girl 1: (puts head in hands)**

**Teacher:** With the assistance of me and the rest of the class. Let's give it a go. **(Lowers the interactive whiteboard)** So let's start by working out 50% – which is how much?

**Girl 1:** Half

**Teacher:** What's half of 160?

**Girl 1:** 60

**Teacher:** Not quite. Let's start with what's half of 100

**Girl 1:** 50

**Teacher:** Write down 50. What's half of 60?

**Girl 1:** 30

**Teacher:** Right. Let's add them together

**Girl 1:** 80

**Teacher:** I'll tell you what, I'll write it down for you. So 50% of 160 is . . .

**Girl 1:** 80

**Teacher:** So let's cut that in half. So 25% equals. What's half of 80?

**Girl 1:** 40

**Teacher:** Excellent! Well done. Add them together and write it down.

**(Girl 2 adds 80 + 40 and writes down 120. Whole class claps)**

**Teacher:** Brilliant stuff!

**Mathematics:** Phase 3 lesson observation

The teacher's dialogue is no different when talking to boys or girls. There was an equal amount of instruction and praise recorded. However, the issue has two potential conclusions. First, the teacher is a role model to the boys and, as such, has greater influence on their learning. They can relate to a bond between males that they have not experienced before within their primary education. The second concerns curriculum time spent in the male-dominated environment. Primary schools offer substantially fewer male teachers than secondary schools do. This will have an impact on transferring girls who have to adapt to the male-dominated culture that their home curriculum teacher offers; as a result, learning that takes up 60% of their timetable is initially stilted.

Experience within secondary settings suggests that the lessons observed were typical of Year 7 experience. Factors indicated that children's adaptation and learning progression was not seamless. Three dominant transition issues included children's recall of skills, knowledge and understanding learnt in their primary school. First, children's ability to detail and develop stories, as observed in Phase 2, and their ability to recall and define fractions, decimals and percentages in a secondary context. Second, the lesson observations highlighted the children's ability to work confidently in groups and ensure task progression. Unlike Phase 2, microsystems within groups caused conflict, whilst developing a variety of language systems hindered learning time. Finally, issues with adaptation to

male-dominated mesosystems caused, for some, inhibition and strain in confidence with further learning opportunities.

#### **5.4.9 Independent learning activity: constructing a tower**

The independent learning activity involved the sample children constructing either a 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional tower using spaghetti and a range of craft materials. To secure the tower, the children used Blu-tac and sellotape. I introduced the initial concept and the end evaluation activity. There was no other input. The activity replicated the purpose of Phase 2 identifying language strategies to complete the task successfully. However, the analysis portrayed a very different picture, with variable quality in the final construct and a distinct change in learning relationships. However, subtheme analysis recognised identical language clusters used by each child. Yet the sample's interaction and off-task comments caused greater language variation than was recorded in the work-related dialogue. As with Phase 2, the independent learning activity developed two recurring thematic threads: complexity of language used and question analysis; and language to aid task progression. Tables 5.10a and 5.10b describe similarities and differences between each case.

#### **5.4.10 Complexity of language used and question analysis**

Phase 3 offered a greater contrast of language to support learning throughout each activity. This was not associated with task complexity, as the sample children still required identical language tools and skills to access the tower construction. In addition, the children adopted identical roles within the microsystem and subsystems that supported construction, as in Phase 2. However, in comparison to Phase 3 lesson observations there was greater conflict of language sequences within each microsystem that, particularly for Case 1, hindered the process of construction. Despite adopting identical language roles to Phase 2, the organisation and make up of each microsystem continually changed. For example, there was less evidence of Case 1 taking turns whilst exploring ideas. Each child's contribution lacked sufficient evaluation and, as a result, hindered the task set.

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Quality of prototype:</b> Children began the task as a group, but moved into individual groups to make independent towers that eventually merged. This task was unsuccessful, as the differing towers could not support one another.		
<b>Theme 1:</b> Complexity of language used and question analysis.		
<b>Similarities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children adopted roles that replicated the raft activity. Throughout the activity, they did not divert from these.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
Evidence of complex language demonstrated some exploration of ideas. However, there was insufficient turn-taking in group conversations, which prevented ideas from coming to fruition.	All children contributed to ideas. However, there was minimal evidence of enquiry furthering understanding of the purpose of individual suggestions.	Little evidence to support the use of children's enquiry skills using conjunctions to support answers.
Child 3 continually brought the group together by using the term 'we' whilst giving instructions and 'you' when initiating sanctions. When the children were off-task, Child 3 used direct instruction supported by conjunctions to begin explorations of ideas.	Children had the ability to challenge ideas and evaluate their outcomes.	The partnership allowed Child 7 to take the lead in checking each stage carefully. This ensured Child 4's ideas were adequate for the task. As the activity progressed, Child 4 developed in confidence.
There was an increase in off-task talk. This included unrelated dialogue exchanges e.g. comparison of Year 7 teachers and children. Other conclusions led to a lack of confidence and ability to fulfil the criteria of the task.	Children used questions for initial planning and construction of the base. This ensured a firm support structure for the tower.	There was a hidden system of dialogue as Child 7 experimented with ideas before presenting them.
Questions categorised and confirmed ideas, whilst aiding task progression.	There were consistent sequences of questions throughout the task. The pattern developed into task-orientated questions, clarification of ideas and putting evaluated ideas into practice.	Child 4 began the task with an initial lack in confidence of ideas. Child 4 continually sought clarification of own ideas put forward.
	All children remained focused on the task set, developing secure layers of subsystems. There was little movement between each.	Despite little evidence suggesting evaluation of procedures, the children developed good systems of dialogic exchange. Child 7 translated Child 4's ideas by representing them visually prior to adding to the structure.
The task became erratic once task-initiated questions decreased.		

**Table 5.10(a):** Phase 3 – Independent learning activity: Complexity of language used and question analysis

Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>Theme 2:</b> Task progression analysis		
<b>Similarities:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children developed identical language profiles that replicated the raft activity.</li> </ul>		
<b>Differences:</b>		
<p>Child 3 continually used direct instructions to bring the group together. Child 3 evaluated strategies used to progress the activity and give confidence to the group.</p>	<p>Children used combinations of instructions and questions that contributed to the success of the task.</p>	<p>At times, Child 7 disassociated from the dyad using non-verbal dialogue to evaluate progression and ideas. Child 7 developed a monosystem adding a further layer to the microsystem.</p>
<p>Child 6 actively sought membership into sub-systems, eventually settling into the preferred language cluster of 'advisor'. Child 6 naturally moved between language systems and balanced on- and off task-talk to gain recognition within the group as a whole. Child 6 used prior knowledge and experience to contribute to the activity.</p>	<p>Sequence of exploratory language was followed by children visualising and sharing ideas. This developed conversational and collaborative skills.</p>	<p>Throughout the task, there was little sharing of ideas.</p>
<p>Despite the group not succeeding in building a securely-constructed tower, there was less frustration with the task than that of the raft activity.</p>		<p>Despite not being confident in the stipulated task, Child 4 had the ability to move between language categories.</p>

**Table 5.10(b):** Phase 3 – Independent learning activity: Task progression analysis

**(Constructing the first level of the tower)**

**Child 6:** We need to add strength to the floor by putting more on the side.

**Child 4:** No. Then that would roll over.

**Child 5:** We need to stick it like that [Child 6].

**Child 2:** Get two . . .

**Child 4:** Whoops it's just broke!

**Child 2:** No, don't do it like that.

**Child 5:** Just stick it on the table now.

**Child 6:** I think it will be much easier . . .

**Child 5:** Oh come on, just stick it there.

**Child 2:** It'll be easier if we stuck two . . .

**Child 4:** I think we need to be much more selective.

**Child 2:** Just stick the two together.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Case 3 offered minimal evidence of evaluation whilst considering ideas. There was more evidence of hidden dialogue as Child 7 translated ideas by visually modelling concepts. There was little verbal exchange.

**(Securing a cross beam to two legs)**

**Child 7:** (Grabs hold of Child 4's upright and works out the position of it by trying out whether it should be upright or slanted)

**Child 4:** Right, now one across there? Hang on we need to move this, that's about equal with it.

**Child 7:** Yes. We need to sellotape the top bit of these.

**Child 4:** Where we've put . . . ?

**Child 7:** Yes. The cross beam [ . . . ] (Ensures that uprights are in the right position before connecting the crossbeam. Places the crossbeam on)

**Child 4:** Right we are going to need to sellotape this so that piece fits that.

**Child 7:** (Observes the structure. Works out where the sellotape should go by balancing the cross beam and sticks it. Sticks a further piece of sellotape on and continually checks work)

**Child 4:** So that needs to be like that. Do we need to put around like that?

**Child 7:** (Reinforces the base with more sellotape whilst Child 4 continues with construction)

**Case 3:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Both examples represent inconsistency with turn-taking and use of complex language. The sample children did not use connectives to justify or respond to ideas. At times, Case 1 dialogue was erratic and unstructured with each child ensuring that its contribution was heard. This affected the success of their tower. Despite fewer examples of connectives in Case 3, dialogue exchanges were disguised with Child 7 silently experimenting with ideas to evaluate their success. At times within the activity Child 4 had to second-guess answers to queries asked.

Case 2 developed cohesive and sustainable partnerships that had the ability to challenge ideas and evaluate their outcomes. The sample children settled into subgroups with little movement between them. Only Children 5 and 6 operated across subsystems actively seeking membership in all. The group had a hierarchy of independent roles that modelled Case 1 and Case 3 during the Phase 2 independent learning activity. This

seemed innate and not determined at the start of the activity. Throughout the task, behaviours of the sample group remained consistent. Language focused on continual improvement of the construction and its design. Case 2 initially used materials to design and visualise their tower. There was discussion on its support structure and areas of potential weakness. The sample children methodically planned each phase. As a result, there was minimal waste of resources.

Compared to Phase 2, the learning behaviours of the children had changed. Case 1 had a substantial increase in off-task talk consisting of unrelated dialogue that included perceptions of teachers, peers and social pressures. As a result, the task became less organised and poorer in quality. The sample children had transferred from a small distribution of classes into a variety of tutor groups. Consequently, social relationships between them had declined, with none of the children sharing tutors. The independent learning activity gave the sample children opportunities to discuss concerns and share stories. Hence, they refocused potential learning outcomes. In addition, task-related questions decreased, which prevented a successful conclusion to the task. Case 3 identified the sample children's lack in confidence and pressure to complete the task successfully. Child 4 continually checked with Child 7 that ideas presented were worthwhile and relevant to the process. However, Case 2 had few off-task conversations and amalgamated consistent sequences of dialogue. The sample children used questions for initial planning and construction. A consistent pattern emerged ordering task orientation, clarification of concept and evaluation.

**Child 5:** Why don't we put some Blu-tac on the table to make it stand up?

**Child 2:** Shall we do that, four clumps of Blu-tac on the table to make sure it all stands up? [ . . . ]  
Where are we going to make it?

**Child 4:** Shall we put it here?

**Child 2:** I suppose that's alright in the middle.

**Child 4:** Don't you think that's a bit too much tac?

**Child 2:** No, it will make it strong.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

The exchange discusses the best way to secure the legs onto the table. Child 5 initiated the idea to use Blu-tac. Child 2 developed the idea, whereupon Child 4 responded by seeking clarification of where the structure should stand. Child 4 then furthered the discussion by challenging the amount of Blu-tac placed onto the tower's base. This sought clarification and evaluation of the initial concept. The questioning sequence occurred throughout the task. Therefore, Case 2's primary uses of questions were to move the activity forward and not restrict task-related dialogue.

#### 5.4.11 Task progression analysis

Differences emerged between Phases 2 and 3 in the co-operative work of each case. There were substantial disparities in decisions made to achieve the outcome. Despite this, the sample children adopted identical linguistic profiles contained within the microsystems. For example, the same children from each case gave advice, or effectively managed resources. The sample children did not deviate from these characteristics, but adapted them to suit the changing needs of the group. At the beginning, Child 6 from Case 1 actively sought membership of the existing group. The child had transferred into a different school and therefore had to redefine contributions made. The child balanced on- and off-task talk to further gain recognition and used prior knowledge and experience to advise on the tower's construction. Towards the end of the activity, Child 6 settled into a preferred language style and comfortably advised the group on their outcome.

**Extract of conversation at the start of the independent learning activity:**

**Child 6:** Our [tutor] room is a new block.

**Child 2:** What the English block?

**Child 6:** Yes, it's a new block with new furniture. But the funny thing is we found 14 dead Roman bodies . . . it was so cool.

**Extract of conversation towards the end of the activity:**

**Child 6:** We need to make this strong so we can put them all on top of each other.

**Child 4:** That's just what I said, isn't it? That's just what I said.

**Child 3:** We just need to get on now.

**Child 5:** OK, slot it in.

**Child 2:** Where did that go? **(the piece of spaghetti being used shoots onto the floor)**

**Child 3:** We need some more.

**Child 5:** How many? **(passes spaghetti over)**

**Child 6:** That's too short [ . . . ]

**Child 4:** [Child 6] how is yours going to have floors?

**Child 6:** I don't know yet. Perhaps when we fasten this here **(points to the tower's leg)**

**Child 3:** Ah, I've got it.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Part way through, the sample children decided that they would work independently and construct separate towers. They divided into discrete subsystems and Child 5 unified them by distributing resources. At the end of the activity, the children attempted to combine their towers, but none was secure.

Case 3 operated as a complete system throughout the task. Despite Child 4 not being confident in making decisions, the child was confident in moving between language categories and identified with a range of roles. At times, Child 7 disassociated from the



microsystem and formed a 'monosystem' allowing time for self-reflection and experimentation of ideas. This aided the construction process by clarification of design features. On the other hand, Case 2 significantly developed from Phase 2 as a group. Emergent subthemes displayed controlled sequences of language combining question/enquiry, reflection and instruction. Children continually modelled concepts. The sample children naturally developed roles within the system, and effectively interchanged between subsystems. Ownership of the construction developed throughout the task. There was a consistent use of 'we' and consistent challenge and acceptance of everybody's ideas. The outcome was successful, with the tower standing independently and supporting three levels.

**ENQUIRY**  
**REFLECTION**  
**MODEL**  
**INSTRUCTION**  
**QUESTION**  
**REFLECTION**  
**INSTRUCTION**  
**MODEL**  
**QUESTION**  
**REFLECTION**

**Child 2:** Not being funny, but I don't know what the Eiffel Tower looks like.  
**Child 4:** It's basically like this. **(Gets two pieces of spaghetti and makes an A-shape)** Those two are the legs on the other side.  
**Child 3:** We could use Blu-tac to fix it to the floor.  
**Child 2:** Does it go like that?  
 And we could cross over like this.  
**Child 3:** We could lay out the spaghetti like that to make the floor.  
**(Lays out five pieces of spaghetti side-by-side on the table).**  
**Child 2:** Are we doing it laid down or stood up?  
**Child 4:** We could do it laid down first so we get the shape.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Successful task progression emerged from consistent use of dialogue and enquiry. Case 2 worked independently and identified features of successful construction. These included strengthening the tower's base and securing it to the table. All ideas developed were either modelled or experimented on. All sample children participated fully. Case 3 identified a further language system within their group. The 'monosystem' allowed space to reflect upon and evaluate ideas from others. Despite duplicating linguistic identities developed in Phase 2, Case 1 hindered task progression and attempted to balance on- and off-task talk. This affected the developed microsystem, and eventually the sample children dispersed into discrete dyads. From the analysis, it is evident that Case 2 continually supported peer relationships throughout their transfer. Transferring within the same building with familiar peers and teachers, the sample children settled into the task with ease. On the other hand, Case 1 took time to settle. Despite completing the same activity in Phase 2, the tower seemed almost alien, and relationships within the microsystem needed to be re-established. Case 3 identified with features of Cases 1 and 2. Despite taking time to settle within the task, the sample children successfully constructed their tower by using developed language and enquiry tools.

#### 5.4.12 Summary of Phase 3

Phase 3 further explored the variations in each case as the sample children transferred to secondary school. The student voice activity emphasised the children's changed perceptions of their Year 6 experiences, especially the need to sit SATs. Each case identified the restrictions that testing placed on curriculum and the 'burden' instilled on the children's learning experience. Throughout Phase 3 issues of language-demand were clearly evident. Case 1 described how they had to learn 'sixth-form' language to access their Year 7 curriculum. Lesson observations detected language concerns with children being unable to transfer knowledge and understanding from their classroom mesosystem into microsystems of practical activity. Furthermore, the actual process of transferring information from Year 6 into Year 7 was also problematic. Comparing lesson observations from Phases 2 and 3 showed that children had the ability to rewrite key points of Cinderella in Phase 2, but were unable to identify and develop key points of their own stories in Phase 3. Oral language prohibited development and confidence within set tasks. The independent learning activity continued to highlight differences in the use of language to solve problems. Case 1 had to dissolve the overarching microsystem and develop ideas within dyads. In contrast, Case 2 children were able to develop their construction, drawing upon experience of Phase 2.

The main conclusion from Phase 3 suggests that providing and understanding consistency of context is pivotal to successful transfer. Specifically:

- The sample children recognised changes in curriculum and pedagogical tools between all professional stakeholders.
- Ensuring consistency requires mutual understanding of a developmental provision for learning entitlement. This will equip transferring children with knowledge that is embedded, using accurate subject-specific terminology and confidence to explore further knowledge in different learning contexts.
- Consistency is two-fold. First, is an acknowledgment that there is much to learn between professional stakeholders across each phase of education where commonality of practice will lead to a continuous diet of children's learning development and familiarity.

- Second, the need to understand that post-transfer children are already equipped with many years of education. On entering new school environments, this needs acknowledgment, to ensure children successfully adapt to new learning contexts.

## **5.5 Summary of Chapter 5**

This chapter draws on a range of data. Initially, data focused on the exosystems and macrosystems associated with each case. Responses identified issues of learning and language from professional roles operating within comparable systems. No model of transfer was perceived as seamless.

- Case 2 minimised anxiety as children made their transfer within the same school building. However, as with Case 1 and Case 3, transfer became disjointed as issues of language progression, continuity of learning and consistency of classroom practice emerged. These themes were consistent throughout the analysis of each case study.
- Case 1 and Case 3 identified anxiety stemming from myth, while Case 2's all-through system minimised this. However, peer myth had little significance on the overall findings. Year 6 teacher perception contributed significantly to anxiety, as the sample children felt that knowledge received was misinformed and overly exaggerated.
- Further anxiety arose from SATs, as their contributions to Year 6 provided a more significant role in disrupting continuity of a child's learning. The anxiety of external testing was apparent to all participants within the cases, including both professional stakeholders and children. Anxiety was three-fold. Firstly, pressures placed on schools that cascade from macrosystems continually raising benchmarks and publicising results. Secondly, the impact of SATs on exosystems and mesosystems with curriculum restriction and pressures on children to learn skills required to access test papers. Literacy and numeracy dominated an apparently broad and balanced curriculum. Finally, the 'burden' placed on teachers and the creation of microsystems that developed within the classroom. The burden stemmed from limitations of delivering a creative curriculum that fulfilled a child's learning potential.

- Further pressures within each transition model were triggered by language demands placed on children by their teachers in Year 6 and in Year 7. This created significant stress and frustration in the sample children. Across Phases 2 and 3, inconsistencies arose in oral and written language. Despite recognition of language issues within the primary context, and the need for children to be taught basic skills, these issues were not addressed during the transition process. Recognised tools included turn-taking, social cues, questioning for understanding, and mental definition of difficult words from stories and instruction. However, the independent learning activity concluded that children innately developed consistent language structures that contributed to the microsystems developed.
- Anxiety was furthered by demanding teacher-talk and key differences in the use of keywords within the same subjects. For smooth transition, the challenge is to ensure consistency of teacher expectation, effective transfer of language tools, and curriculum and classroom provision.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion of results

*'If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher.'*

**Bernstein (1970 p 115)**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

School arrangements in England expect that a child aged 11 has become independent in learning and can successfully move from an almost singular context of learning into multifarious contexts. As a result, the learning relationships forged in one school need to be extended and developed in another. Bowlby (1969) suggests that a child's warm and continuous relationship with a caregiver promotes psychological health and well-being (Thompson, 1997). This stability can frequently be observed in children in Year 6 as the child develops secure relationships with their teacher and peers, but is often fractured during transfer. Most Year 6 children have the ability to operate socially and academically within the busyness of Year 6 classrooms. By understanding learning routines and expectations, and with the consistency of a single teacher, the child thrives in confidence and learning development. However, beneath the industry of classroom life, the same child is expected to operate within a complex web of interrelations (Galton *et al*, 1999b). To understand how children navigate themselves in learning, and develop explicit learning tools that transfer successfully, it is essential to analyse how they operate and adjust within classroom microsystems. This chapter uses the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner to deepen the analysis of data in Chapter 5. It examines the theoretical themes that emerged from data analysis in the context of research questions. The recognised threads enhance understanding of learning requirements pre- and post-transfer.

#### **6.2 How do teachers provide effective skills and experiences to support and challenge the child at transition?**

The purpose of this study is to understand contributions participants make to learning within the confines of classroom life. In the broadest sense, a teacher provides strategies and knowledge to embed learning. Children develop strategies to transfer

knowledge into a variety of contexts, from new learning environments to the minutiae of microsystems. Therefore, to understand how microsystems evolve, it is essential to understand the elements of language and social participation between learning peers and their teacher. Mercer (2008) suggests that one element of guided constructed knowledge is 'learning'. Another is the mode of language to construct learning socially. Therefore, to understand and assess teacher effectiveness within each case study the data suggest three areas of enquiry. The first is to understand the roles of teachers and learners as participators in learning. This identifies developing relationships in socially constructed learning environments. The second furthers understanding on how Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) challenge a child's learning and social development throughout the transition period. Finally, the ORACLE study highlighted the impact of urban folklore on children during transition (Delamont and Galton, 1996). Transition research has yet to understand how teacher perception and myth has the potential to influence child anxiety during transfer. This section analyses the effect teacher myth has on child anxiety.

### **6.2.1 The roles of teachers and learners as social participators in learning**

Middle childhood is the start of biological and social changes within a child. Early relationships with caregivers and teachers are important in evoking good emotional health, self-confidence and self-esteem (Thompson, 2008). Each is an important contributor to effective and sustainable learning, and has the potential to shape individuals (Thompson, 2008). However, the debate also suggests that insecure relationships can affect learning profoundly. At the point of transfer, an early pubescent child is witnessing biological changes leading to a transformation in cognitive, emotional and behavioural systems. The child actively seeks independence by transferring dependence from caregiver to peer (Allen, 2008). All sample children identified transition as a process leading to immediate maturation both socially and academically. They spoke of Year 7 teachers respecting them as individuals rather than as a collective year group. Therefore, to promote social independence, the teacher faces pedagogical dilemmas to ensure effective and sustainable learning. The roles of teachers and learners evolve by merging discrete dyad relationships that enhance learning entitlement and learning ability.

**(Discussion about being in Year 6)**

**Child 2:** It's quite exciting because you feel older but I don't feel old because you're surrounded by little ones and we're really tall in Year 6. [ . . . ]

**Child 4:** It's exciting because once you're in Year 7 you can make much more friends because in Year 6 you know almost everybody in the school and in Year 7 you won't know hardly anyone.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 student voice activity

The purpose of whole class teaching is to raise standards of academic achievement. For standards to rise, each mesosystem needs relationships of mutual understanding and confidence to equip children to explore learning concepts. Across all cases, stakeholders defined confident learners as 'curious, children willing to take risks and make mistakes. Confident children who have resilience, are very secure in basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, and are leaders in learning no matter what stage they are at in their education.' Successful transfer relies on primary schools releasing confident learners who can adapt into new environments with ease. This then allows successive continuity in their learning. Goodnow (2001) suggests that learners are classified in terms of their needs, attainment and progress.

**Researcher:** How would you classify your learners?

**Teacher 2:** They're taught how to do a test because of the nature of Year 6 and their SATs. We have to do that.

**Case 3:** Phase 1 teacher interview

A different Year 6 class teacher with children of similar abilities classified learners as confident and ready to be released into a secondary-style curriculum. As a result of understanding the children's learning ability, the teacher detailed successful transfer outcomes by acknowledging that the class could sustain confidence in their learning and adaptation into a new physical setting. However, the Phase 1 interviews also supported a view that an 'apparent' dip in attainment is due to procedures not running concurrently with a child's ability. Therefore, the reality is that every child has a very different transition to make.

Having high expectations of themselves as learners, all the sample children also had high expectations of their teachers. Throughout the study, children identified characteristics of learning attributes that required development by all classroom participants. Perceptions of teacher strategies included acknowledgement of learning styles, flexibility of curriculum time and content to ensure differentiated learning occurred, and opportunities to widen participation in all activities. Within these structures, pedagogical tools embedded independence of thought, strategies to explore concepts and opportunities

to celebrate understanding. Despite similarities, distinctions were made between primary and secondary school teachers. During Phases 1 and 2, children spoke of an intense relationship that developed between them and their Year 6 teacher. Children expressed the importance of personality, and claimed their teachers created a love of learning. They did not speak of learning being a personal challenge, but a challenge within classroom structures. As a result, situating learning in the wider mesosystem suggested that activities were continually teacher-led.

**Researcher:** How do your teachers make learning fun in Year 6?

**Child 5:** We had a big Science day where we had to put things into jars. We learnt a bit as well because we had big jars.

**Child 2:** They were like big . . .

**Child 1:** Wine making jars and we did experiments with them.

**Child 4:** One had carbon dioxide and the other had oxygen.

**Child 1:** It was one of those things where we had to measure the reaction and the explosion reaction.

**Child 2:** We used mint and vinegar.

**Child 4:** My teacher got the table at the front and using his white board had 'Saturday Live Kitchen' on it. He was actually doing Tray Arts with them and he got a child out the front to do these bits and then he asked the child to turn it round and he had already done the other side and it was all pretty and everything.

**Case 1:** Phase 1 student voice activity

During the transition year, children had experience of working with Year 7 teachers. Student voice activities concluded this had a positive impact on their transfer, as there was little difference between each phase of teaching. However, on entry to Year 7, children expressed concern about partnership teaching due to limited resources. Case 3 identified that in Year 7, teachers added 'life' to their learning by using relevant and exciting resources that were not used in their primary school. As a result, children could interpret learning outcomes visually.

In contrast to Year 6, Year 7 heightened children's expectations by stressing the importance of subject knowledge. The sample children detailed perceptions of the quality of teaching that supported learning entitlement. The children enjoyed consistent learning routines between lessons and continually had opportunities in class to reflect and develop learning techniques.

**Researcher:** What's made your learning improve so much?

**Child 7:** Just funner lessons and wanting to get more involved, and not just hang back. The teacher quality, like, here. Instead of not like push you, they push you even more so you get the higher results. They don't hang back and always go forward.

**Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity



Cases reclassified the demands of learning with increased challenge of routines and curriculum. Despite initial limited repetition of work, children engaged in learning with renewed excitement. The comparison of lesson observations of Year 6 and Year 7 classes portrayed a different story. Galton *et al* (1999b) documented a substantial increase in child participation during Year 6 and Year 7 school lessons. Therefore, there was an expectation that observed lessons would be rich in classroom exchange and activity. Similarities across phases indicated similar structures with learning activities developed from initial objectives. These were evaluated at the end of the lesson. However, analysis indicated that approximately two-thirds of each lesson was driven by teacher-talk and minimised child participation. Appendix 3 graphically represents summaries of classroom exchange.

Galton *et al* (1999b) concluded that secondary school teachers distance themselves from what went on in primary schools. In addition to promoting and developing effective transferable learning skills, primary teachers also worked within the mechanisms of transfer. Demands placed on Year 6 teachers during transition were three-fold. Firstly, professional participants had to teach a broad and balanced Key Stage 2 curriculum effectively. Secondly, teachers had to develop children's skills to access external tests. Finally, teachers worked within coherent assessment systems to provide informative data to partnership schools. In addition to assessment data, social profiles were developed to ensure effective future partnerships between children, and that they were placed in appropriate class groups. Cases 1 and 3 acknowledged the importance of data collections, but questioned whether documentation beyond external test results was actually read by classroom teachers. Case 2 and Case 3 had consistent progressive data-recording systems. Therefore, conflict emerged identifying potential dips in attainment related to the quality and accessibility of information received by the transfer school. The data are reliable and based on years of pupil classroom experience. For continuous learning, Year 7 teachers need to know their students on entry.

**Teacher 1:** We do a huge amount of form filling in Year 6. Documentation is taken every week for levels and my impression is – I could be wrong as I have only been through the process once here – that all that information is not relayed as effectively as it could be to the teachers in Year 7. It seems like a fruitless mission for us, and I've found that quite surprising with the children being in apparently the same school [ . . . ] I have spent an awful lot of time trying to ensure those children are secure, and cared for, to ensure they have everything they need to go into Year 7 and the teachers want that. There is some gap and that's not actually happening. I don't know what it is, but there is a dip [ . . . ] But teachers are so busy with their classes that they might get a whole load of stuff and do not have the time to look at it. It has to be a realistic transition [ . . . ] it would be good if an LSA (Learning Support Assistant) from Year 6 went up into Year 7 just until the end of Christmas term with the class, or tutor group, to act as a go between for the children, to have another face that they know. The teachers would have something that they would be able to refer to instead of just having this huge void – so that might be an option.

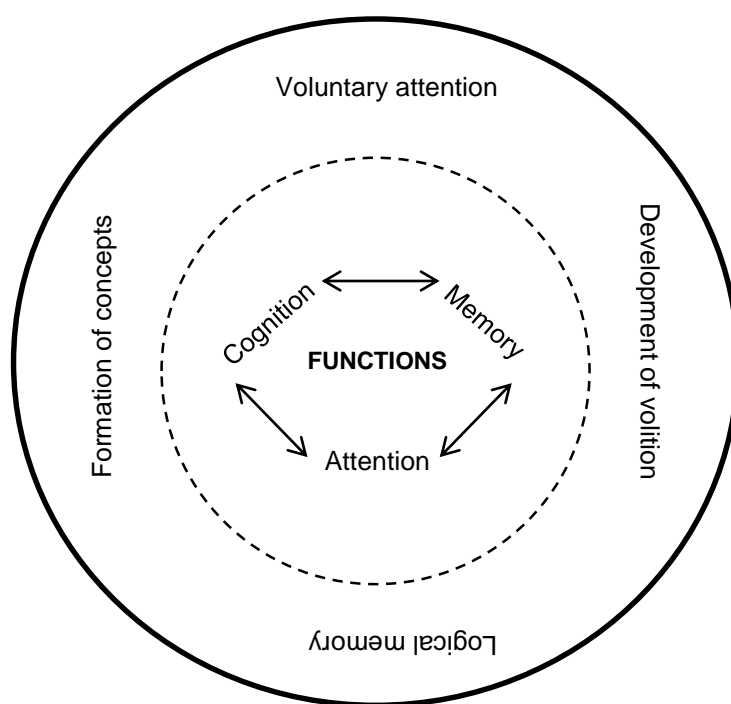
**Case 3:** Phase 1 Year 6 teacher interview

Analysis of data highlighted the importance of positive classroom relationships between all participants increasing the amount of learning. The immediate role of teachers across the study was to forge effective partnerships between children, ensuring consistency of progress and mutual understanding of knowledge. Therefore, the teacher instigated learning microsystems. Further analysis distinguished independent roles of both teachers and learners. The sample children's perception of their teachers was as a provider of knowledge, with them as recipients. However, each role demonstrated further complexities, as teachers were not providers, but had evolved into instigators of knowledge. In order to maximise learning opportunities, they situated knowledge into various contexts that were driven by language. Throughout the sample children's transition year, they experienced working in a variety of whole-class and group situations. Each was connected by language, with children having to learn a variety of linguistic skills to transfer between situations. Some were teacher-led and increased dependency, especially during preparation for external tests. At other times children had opportunities to explore concepts, thus creating an independent environment. This increased the notion of maturation and promoted a perception of independence. However, data also concluded that children had difficulty in translating their developing learning role into the new contexts that their transfer school offered. As a result, learning seemed stilted, as children failed to recognise key concepts they had already learnt.

### **6.2.2 Purpose of Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in a child's learning**

The purpose of SATs is not to test knowledge accumulated throughout Key Stage 2, but to benchmark literacy and numeracy skills against national standards. SATs are a test of memory and an application of skills to interrogate text; extend writing opportunities; and apply numeric understanding. Dilemmas for some schools concerned the desire for advancement up national league tables versus provision of a balanced curriculum. Do schools teach 'to the test' to ensure public accountability, or instil sustainable skills and understanding that secures provision for Key Stage 3? No matter where the school is placed in terms of attainment, SATs identify with memorising and application of basic skills. Wood (1998) suggests that schooled societies attempt to memorise information for its own sake. Throughout a child's education, there is a need for deliberate memorisation as a tool that groups and categorises objects. Therefore, knowledge is an assimilation of 'reconstructive' remembering (Cole, 2003). As a result, the children's transition period is founded upon memorising facts to transfer into multiple new contexts.

Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) identify children needing to master culturally-explicit tools categorised as: voluntary attention, logical memory, formation of concepts and development of volition. Mastery of these is embedded into the cultural functioning of an individual through social and genetic relations. This forms the foundations of higher functions that require mastery and internalisation. Cognition, memory and attention are shared 'socially' with equal distribution. Therefore, the development of each situates within a child's mesosystem and is shared socially within each microsystem. Figure 6.1 illustrates such a model. It was evident that throughout the study SATs were culturally embedded into school life. Translated from macrosystems that generated school policy and procedure, SATs functioned within either curriculum development – or restriction –during the test preparation period.



**Figure 6.1:** Understanding learning development within a mesosystem and microsystem

While SATs furthered foundations of cultural development within a child's learning, they also had the potential to hinder progression of mastery and internalisation of tools. Case 2 highlighted concern about external testing creating a culture of dependency, thus strengthening the concentric divide. A legacy of dependency will have the drastic effect of trapping a child within a mesosystem, unable to gain independence to operate within learning microsystems. This will diminish opportunities that the curricula for Key Stages 3 and 4 offer.

**Senior Leadership Team 1:** We do need some sort of benchmark to see where they're at, but being in Year 6 for us is another matter, we can build those in wherever we think is appropriate and where the children are. There is no doubt in my mind that if SATs were to go, it would have the same impact as Key Stage 3 has had. It would open up learning and we could start teaching the needs of the children, which is not necessarily to get a Level 4 in your English when actually you have not got all the building blocks to help you. If we're allowed to just concentrate on what they get at Key Stage 4 and build what we think is appropriate to get them that, then we can get them in way excess of where they could be. I have no doubt in my mind that it narrows learning [ . . . ] Basically, we cut out most of the National Curriculum because it's not going to be on the SATs paper and what a nonsense is that.

**Phase 1:** Case 3 Senior Leadership Team interview

Understanding of the purpose and interpretation of SATs developed throughout the study. Perceptions founded by professional participants during Phase 1 identified the inconvenience of SATs during the transition period. Arguments included a climate of distrust of rigorous teacher assessment throughout Year 6. Teacher assessments involved levelling work of children's application of basic skills across all subject areas. Such assessment regimes highlighted understanding of children's perceived cultural learning development and their internalisation of cognitive skills within a range of subject areas. Case 1 identified on-going assessment which was benchmarked against nationally-agreed level descriptors as a true representation of a child's progress, with SATs developed into a formal moderation tool. However, professional stakeholder interviews clearly identified secondary schools as doing a 'disservice' to transferring children by only noting SATs results, and by dismissing teacher assessment.

**Senior Leadership Team 1:** We are doing constant teacher assessments, which back up their SATs tests. These are important to see what children can achieve under pressure, but I feel it's that good solid teacher assessment that is absolutely constant. I feel that it's that test now, not that grade one is consistently performing at [ . . . ] It would be good for [transfer secondary school] to come in to talk to us about how we are grading children. I am confident that we are grading accurately in Maths, English and Science. Those sort of areas are somewhat easier to assess as our knowledge is just so high, but in other areas are we just getting it wrong. Do you know what I mean?

**Phase 1:** Case 1 Senior Leadership Team interview

Initially children viewed SATs as an integral part of their education; as a 'boost' to learning opportunities. During Phase 1 the sample children equated SATs with anxiety necessary to demonstrate their learning capabilities. Already, the children acknowledged that their SATs results would place them in appropriate learning groups for the 'rest' of their secondary school career. This notion added momentum to learning, as they did not want to be placed in lower-ability learning groups.

**Child 2:** Instead of just having six hours of school learning if you are to pass your SATs you could then do some more work you had learnt that day again as your homework. You can memorise it and help you the next time your teacher does it – that's why I like homework [ . . . ] When I was in Year 5 I don't think, 'I'm going to make it in Year 6', but now I'm actually in Year 6, and if I work, how I work, I will actually make it through my SATs.

**Phase 1:** Case 3 student voice activity

**Child 3:** SATs will decide what sets you're gonna be in for most of your secondary life. So if you don't do good in SATs you won't be able to go up sets, and then in SATs you know you have to give it your all and remember everything that you've learned.

**Child 2:** Say if you're in your SATs and you try really hard but then say you've missed out something because you've misread something. And then you think that this is going to change the rest of your future, because actually when you go into Year 7, because that's where you're actually going to start.

**Phase 2:** Case 2 student voice activity

As Phase 2 progressed, children identified SATs as a 'burden' to their teachers placing unnecessary pressures to ensure targets were met and exceeded. This resulted in fractured mesosystems as children experienced continual teaching of tools to access and answer test questions. In particular, Cases 2 and 3 spoke of working within a 'pressurised' unit structured by continual assessment and test preparation. As Phase 2 developed, creative elements of the curriculum disappeared. In addition to teacher 'burden', anxiety developed with parental pressure for children to achieve. Despite a positive triadic relationship between child, parent and teacher, anxiety situated itself within each mesosystem in which the child participated.

**Researcher:** When I spoke with you last time I asked what advice you would offer a Year 5. Now, what advice would you offer your Year 6 teacher?

**Child 2:** To be a lot more relaxed during SATs because she was bit too stressed and she didn't really need to be stressed. She taught us well enough and she didn't need to put any more hard work into it.

**Child 5:** Do what she's doing at the end of the year by saying 'are you sure about that answer' and giving us more confidence. She only started doing it two or three weeks before SATs. If she would've started it at the start of the year we would have been more confident in SATs.

**Child 2:** We used to do shared time on a Wednesday in the afternoon. She should've kept on doing that. It would've given everybody a confidence boost. There's a girl in our class who's very quiet and she now says stuff in front of people and since then has been a lot more confident.

**Phase 2:** Case 2 student voice activity

Post-SATs developed a perceived relaxed curriculum whereby inconsistent classroom routines emerged that affected children's transition. The sample children viewed post-SATs as 'down time'. They did not conceive learning development positively towards the end of Year 6. Across each case, children identified relaxed experiences that de-skilled their pace of learning, but increased anxiety of transfer. However, all children considered

that SATs were at the right time of the academic calendar, allowing time to renew the 'fun' in learning and to prepare for transfer.

**Child 4:** Now that we've finished SATs we don't really have to do anything else because we've already been given our initial levels, so now we don't have to work so hard because we've done the main amount of work.

**Child 2:** [Year 7's] bit daunting now 'cos we're gonna have homework every night and now we don't have much homework.

**Phase 2:** Case 1 student voice activity

**Child 7:** Instead of doing lots of things in an hour, we do less things in two hours. I think it's a lot better.

**Child 2:** It's more relaxed in the classroom

**Researcher:** Do you think it's going to be more demanding in Year 7?

**Child 4:** Of course because we're more relaxed now aren't we? 'Cos when we go back in September is gonna be work, work, work.

**Phase 2:** Case 3 student voice activity

Professional stakeholders identified this time as developing 'creative curricula' ensuring all children resurrected learning 'enjoyment' after the anxieties of SATs. Year 6 lessons post-SATs observed a distinct departure from developing learning in mesosystem structures. Children approached learning creatively within microsystems with an apparent transfer of culturally-developed tools.

Despite the focus on SATs during Year 6, children's perceptions of SATs radically changed on transfer. No longer were SATs perceived as a boost to learning, or a tool to secure 'higher' learning sets. Some of the sample children felt let down by the process and rigour SATs demanded in Year 6. Children described their SATs process as a tool to learn memorisation skills. However, according to the children such skills were not transferrable across curriculum areas. Change of perception is categorised into two identified themes. The first detailed the impact SATs had on the child's experience and challenge of Year 6. Phases 1 and 2 highlighted anxieties related to SATs and the pressure placed on children and professional stakeholders to achieve. Learning was dominated in carefully constructed mesosystems, removing skills and experience related to independent learning. The second considered how children perceived professional stakeholders' views and justification of external tests. There was no correlation between the children's perceptions of the views of teachers across Key Stages. Year 6 teachers provided effective strategies and challenges to maximise success for SATs. However, Cases 1 and 3 spoke of secondary school teachers not trusting SATs and minimising the experience of the children. This, therefore,

supported Galton *et al's* (1999b) claim that secondary school teachers are dismissive of the number of years children have already spent in school, and begin secondary education as a 'blank canvass'.

**Child 6:** In maths they don't really trust the SATs. They don't really like them. They re-test us and, because my school is different to the others, they don't know what we've been taught, so they automatically assume we've done what they've done, and we're doing quite a lot of the work that we've already done at the moment so it's quite boring.

**Child 4:** it's a good job we did our SATs . . . but we already knew most of the answers because we'd done it in our maths classes and I don't think . . . when you get to secondary school you don't do that sort of stuff, you do completely different subjects so there's no point in doing SATs maths because at secondary school you'll . . . you've done it here so you won't be expected to do it there.

**Child 6:** I agree. They just go on about how inaccurate they are and you spend too much time preparing for them when it should just test you there and then, but they need to see how much we've retained that and how much we've kept that because we had to learn all that.

### **Phase 3:** Case 1 student voice activity

In addition, to encourage children further in their SATs preparation, Year 6 teachers related SATs to future school success. The sample children did not refer to this as a 'lie', but a fabrication of the tests' importance. In effect, this concept further undermined the sole purpose of SATs.

**Child 7:** [Teacher's] told you what level you were at and what classes you were in. But it didn't really make a big difference to my learning. Preparation for it was far too much than what we should have been doing [ . . . ] [Teachers] said what your SATs results would be will determine what your GCSEs would be and that's not really the same because we are still five years off our exams.

### **Phase 3:** Case 3 student voice activity

Analysis of data identified distinct segregation between classroom mesosystem and microsystems. To conclude, in order to maximise public results at Key Stage 2, children identified themselves as working within the sole confines of a teacher-led classroom meso- and microsystem. Teachers quantified the effectiveness of their provision by referring skills, knowledge and understanding to assessment data. Year 6 children identified with three discrete learning scenarios of pre-SATs, SATs and post-SATs. Pre-SATs offered creative challenges to basic skills. During the SATs preparation period, teachers contributed to a child's learning by ensuring the cultural embedding of SATs to dictate social participation. Hence, they isolated the child into a 'closed' mesosystem. Post-SATs attempted to force the participating child into a collection of microsystems by instilling basic assumptions of secondary school learning and ensuring curriculum creativity. As a result, SATs do not only benchmark child attainment, but also structure learning environments and outcomes.

### 6.2.3 Teacher's perceptions on transfer: fact verses fiction

Delamont and Galton (1996) question whether schools should tackle urban folklore during the transition. Their rationale is that anxieties quickly fade as children enter their transfer school. However, my study probes more deeply into the influence of teacher folklore, and whether this increases and sustains anxiety in children during the transition period. Transitions in everyday life demand social reorganisations, and, at times, it is difficult to separate child and adult anxieties (Lucey and Reay, 2000). Existing studies articulate effects of myth associated with the transferring child, their caregivers and older peers. Data from this study suggest an additional insecurity relating to the perception that teachers are qualified to distinguish fact from fiction. To clarify how myth has the potential to affect transfer it is important to understand the social beginnings of stories. In addition to the development of learning through memorising facts and related skills, memories are also pivotal to social relationships. Thompson (2008) considers the linkage between memory and attachment. Memories have the potential to re-direct events when perceived as painful or disturbing. Also, myth is rich in memories, and such schemas can be elaborated (Cole, 2003). Hence, the greater the elaboration, the less value placed on the initial story. This study suggests that myth feeds and reacts to anxiety, and is strengthened by the type of attachment between story-teller and recipient. Throughout the transition period, the sample children continually spoke of a fondness towards their Year 6 teacher, therefore this was a relationship founded on trust. As a result, the stories and advice drawn from personal experiences were highly influential during the transition period.

During Phase 1, all children spoke of 'horror' stories associated with transition. Unlike previous transition studies (Delamont and Galton, 1996; Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010), these did not include detailed accounts of pupil initiation programmes, or bullying from older peers. They did include stories from caregivers reflecting on their own secondary school days. Caregivers drew on their personal memories adding detailed elaboration to ensure maximum coverage of more insignificant details. The sample children used tools of imagination and speculation on these stories to feed their first thoughts on transfer.

**Child 4:** My Dad said when he was there they used to body shake you and slam you on the ground. If that happened to me then I should wriggle and it won't hurt so much. So if you ever get that just keep wriggling and wriggling and wriggling.

**Phase 1:** Case 1 student voice activity



Children did not recite stories from peers or older siblings. However, they reflected on detail from observations of their transfer school. For example, after the transfer school's open evening, Case 1 concluded that there would be a substantial increase of detentions in Year 7 due to a sign in the music rooms reading 'if you touch the keyboards, you will receive a detention.' Other cases highlighted the importance of how teachers talk to you. Case 3 developed a scenario of teachers in the transfer school shouting more directly at pupils. This story developed from an observation of an insignificant disturbance in the transfer school canteen as the teacher had to raise their voice across the general talk to prevent the issue escalating. Across all cases, the greatest influence of myth stemmed from formal and informal comments and actions made by their Year 6 teachers.

**Child 1:** With [Year 7 transition teacher] when she is teaching Maths she sometimes talks French a bit and it's difficult for some people as she will say something in French to them and they do not know what she is talking about. Like if she is getting really angry with them and she says several very basic French words, and sometimes when she's angry it's very difficult to understand what she is saying.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 student voice activity

**Child 4:** Our [Year 6] teacher used to tell us off and kept on shouting at our class.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

**Child 7:** Not lied, but [Year 6 teachers] over-exaggerated.

**Child 4:** I think they thought of it differently like homework. You must do your homework.

**Child 7:** And you wouldn't get out of it by saying, 'I couldn't do it last night because of family problems'.

**Case 3:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Each case identified insufficient professional development opportunities associated with transition. This, accompanied by inconsistent cluster meetings between feeder and transfer schools, provided Year 6 teachers with poor knowledge of Year 7 classroom learning structures. Case 1 recognised that teachers' experience of secondary schools came from only a week's observation during their training year. Other experiences stemmed from memories of their own secondary schooling that focused on insecurities they faced during Year 7. However, it was viewed that time spent within the children's transfer school would be an opportunity that would support them at transfer. Case 3 also had limited experience of Year 7, and relied on perceptions of secondary school teachers to influence

the transition programme offered. Again, the source of information was deemed to be biased by the sample children. Year 6 teachers admitted that they were equipped to teach up to Level 5 and expected secondary schools to take over from Level 5 onwards. Therefore, Year 6 teachers embedded transition into lessons.

**Teacher 1:** [Training] specifically for transition it was the training I did when I was at University. I spent two days in a Secondary School.

**Teacher 2:** I've had nothing.

**Teacher 1:** Two days at [a secondary school] and I was scared. I think any big school is quite daunting.

#### **Phase 1:** Case 1 Year 6 teacher interview

Throughout the study, the sample children failed to recognise the preparations that had taken place. All cases prepared children through perceived notions of imitating Year 7 lessons, homework organisation, and increased sanctions. Hence, Year 6 children, navigated through the perceived structures of a co-ordinated secondary-style learning mesosystem. However, both teachers and children failed to recognise the influence of the operational details required in developing microsystems to ensure sustainable social and learning continuity. As a result, the sample children lost confidence in transferring learning routines and knowledge between differing contexts. Issues raised concerned the overt perception of differences between Year 6 and Year 7 lessons. All cases identified these as tasks being open-ended, with minimal interaction between teacher and pupil. Despite having no experience of a traditional Year 7 lesson, Child 3's interpretation of a secondary school teacher reflected the teacher's interpretation. Therefore, teacher myth influenced the child's impressions of the transfer school.

**Child 3:** The teacher [in Year 7] can't go round . . . if a teacher tells you to do something really quickly and you need some help, say if you're doing a mental test, if there's only one teacher she can only do one child at a time. You have to sit there and wait and end up getting nothing done.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 1 student voice activity

However, lessons observed across the two Key Stages demonstrated similarities, rather than differences. For example, all teachers delivered instructional details from the front of the classroom; they structured the lessons using a starter activity, setting learning objectives, group and class tasks each relating to the objectives, and a plenary to summarise learning that had taken place; and all teachers moved between groups throughout the entire lesson. Two differences noted included lesson content that was subject-driven and the element of time. Year 6 teachers used flexible timings for activities

and negotiated time at the end of each day, or the next, to revisit objectives as required. Secondary teachers had to wait until their next lesson.

At the start of the transition period, all Year 6 teachers compared successful transition with consistent and challenging homework regimes. Phase 1 children perceived the importance of homework and developed routines for successful completion. For some, homework was exciting and purposeful. For others, it increased anxiety and insecurities of being fully prepared for secondary school life. Post-SATs homework was inconsistent and undervalued the transition process.

**Teacher 1:** I always say to [my classes] that homework is good practice because it's going to be like this and later on I expect them to be more organised – what do you need for this lesson? You tell me. I don't ever get things out for them. They've got their own responsibility for their own things.

**Phase 1:** Case 1 Year 6 teacher interview

**Child 2:** It's a bit daunting now 'cos we're gonna have homework every night and now we don't have much homework.

**Phase 2:** Case 1 student voice activity

In addition to homework routines, teachers continually emphasised the importance of learning routines. Children acknowledged the increased challenge of learning as preparation for Year 7. Increased sanctions to improve learning organisation underpinned the new evolving learning environment. Developing challenging environments in readiness for Year 7 questioned the concept and importance of Year 6 as an important learning period. In effect, for some children the teacher promoted the concept of a gulf between learning experience in Year 6 and Year 7. However, the Year 6 teachers' interpretation bore little resemblance to the reality of Year 7.

**Researcher:** How is your teacher preparing you for Year 7?

**Child 4:** Our teacher gets the basic rules right at the beginning, and that's for Term 1. In Term 2, she says 'you have to get going this year'. Every new term she gives a new target.

**Child 3:** In Maths we start with something that is for Year 5 to revise what we did, then we move into Year 6 and start with something a little harder and then this gets us ready for Year 7. [ . . . ]

**Child 4:** What's good is that if you get stuck on stuff Miss doesn't just say you need to do this, this and this. She says 'you're going up to Year 7 next year, think about it and if you still can't think about it, ask me'. She will in the end help us but we have to think for ourselves and we have to ask questions.

**Phase 1:** Case 2 student voice activity

As the sample children transferred into Year 7, they quickly untangled reality from the fiction presented by their teachers in Year 6. In general, their transfer school was as expected. However, across all cases preparation for transfer neglected to refine accurate details of potential classroom routines and teacher's roles within learning contexts. Reflecting on their Year 6 teacher's role in transition, Case 3 suggested that their teacher should 'chill out and tell no over-exaggerations'. Unsubstantiated comments by Year 6 teachers provoked anxiety by feeding children's imagination. Data analysis showed that teachers' remarks in all cases highlighted inaccuracies of homework demands, role and purpose of SATs, and demands placed on children by secondary classroom routines and 'intense' learning environments. Children identified that teachers did not lie, but elaborated facts about secondary schools in general. In this quotation, Child 2 acknowledged that Year 7 was more demanding than expected. Despite Year 6 teachers speculating that work would be more demanding and gradually increasing the challenge in learning, this did not prepare the child for transfer. As the discussion developed, Child 4 acknowledged that the teacher 'impersonated' a Year 7 teacher by shouting at the class and advising children to become less reliant on the teacher. However, they did not appear to be given guidance on how to do this. On entering Year 7 all sample children identified secondary teachers as approachable and willing to support their learning participation.

**Child 2:** When you're [in primary] you expect it to be as they say. When you're [in primary] they say it's really easy and they give you work that's a bit harder, but by giving you work a bit harder it's like making you learn more to get ready for being up here. The way they were explaining it you're only expecting a little bit more harder work, but it's not, it's completely different.

**Child 4:** Our [Year 6] teacher used to tell us off and kept on shouting at out class. She used to tell us to act in an orderly fashion and all this and not rely on the teacher too much.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Two strategies are implied. Many Year 6 teachers actively promote substantial learning differences between primary and secondary environments in order to enhance learning in Year 6. Their rationale seemed to be that, with increased expectation of Year 7, successful learning routines would manifest themselves in the Year 6 classroom. This would ultimately ensure a seamless learning progression. However, the problem with this view was the belief that learning routines would be naturally integrated into children's learning routines without being identified and practised as strategies for Year 7. The irony was that the primary school teachers had limited, or no experience, of secondary routines of learning.

On the other hand, Year 6 teachers used their own personal experience of being in Year 7 and impressions of their own expectations to paint a worst-case scenario. In this situation, the belief was that by preparing children for the worst at transfer, they would ease into Year 7 with a less demanding reality than the 'myth' presented. In response to the question posed by Delamont and Galton (1996) at the start of this section, it is important for schools to tackle urban folklore to minimise anxiety due to a child's developing imagination during Year 6. However, in order to understand issues of folklore, teachers need to share up to date experiences of different learning contexts across Key Stages. To be effective, Year 6 teachers not only need to draw on experiences from secondary colleagues, but to forge effective partnerships to share and observe existing practices. Without knowledge to share realities, this study demonstrates that, without knowledge of realities, fiction evolves when teachers present perceived fact. Therefore, the initial question should read 'are teacher's equipped to tackle urban folklore?'

#### **6.2.4 Summary of Question 1**

This study identifies that the role of a teacher during the transition period is to ensure that children are prepared academically and socially for the rigours of their transfer school. Therefore, Year 6 teachers are required to develop children as active social participants within a framework of learning. A successful child is one who can confidently operate within the confines of the classroom's mesosystem and didactically adopt learnt skills, knowledge and understanding into multiple microsystems. Successful adaptation ensures children internalise and share learning socially.

The study has identified three potential barriers to successful adaptation where teachers might reconstruct their existing experience and skills to challenge a child at transition.

- The first considered the changing social role of the child as a participant learner. Identification of key biological and social changes of an early pubescent child can affect learning acquisition and provision. This is represented by the distinct development of a child's initial attachment to caregivers being relocated to peers and teachers. The transition period not only encourages a vast range of new learning relationships, but also recognises a child's fractious relationships within the primary setting. As children acquire greater independence in their learning, they are required to develop the greater social independence a secondary school offers.

Some children may struggle to adjust to the complexity of mesosystems in secondary school learning.

- The second highlighted different interpretations of the purpose of SATs. Data considered the purpose of SATs on a child's learning and the dilemmas schools faced in preparation for the tests. SATs' initial purpose is to benchmark a child's progress in literacy and numeracy against national standards. However, collated results are also used for public accountability of primary schools. For some schools in challenging circumstances, there is a regression in curriculum provision to ensure children are suitably prepared to access external tests. In addition, the data concluded that the post-SATs period offered children a more 'relaxed' curriculum that intensified pressure at transfer. Preparation for SATs relies on teacher-led activity and the focus is not promotion of independent learning. This is further emphasised by post-SATs flexibility of curriculum and learning entitlement.
- Finally, the study recognised a developing relationship between the effect of Year 6 teachers' perception of secondary schools and their influence on increased anxiety at transfer. Consideration of the impact of urban folklore on evolving imaginations of the sample children did not stem from stories heard within social communities, but developed from the 'supportive' work of their teachers. However, all cases acknowledged elaboration of teacher experiences. It concluded that, for teachers to ensure effective experience and skills for a child at transfer, they require opportunities to develop on-going partnership work between all schools involved within transition arrangements. It is vital that primary school teachers are familiar with the realities of learning in secondary school. Such work detailed developing professional development opportunities, including observation visits to transfer schools, and opportunities to team-teach to enforce consistency of a seamless transfer. These arrangements would decrease child anxieties and equip teachers with appropriate knowledge and experience to offer transferring children.

### **6.3 What factors benefit or detract from a child's learning at transition? In particular, do socio-cultural settings affect a child's development of independent learning?**

'Theories on the nature of learning claim that learning skills and preferences arise from a combination of hereditary, past-life experiences and socialisation' (Bullock and

Wikeley, 2004 p62). For years, children have been taught subject knowledge without explicit guidance on how to learn (Barton, 2007); therefore, schools have not developed commonalities of language within learning. The debate suggests that if children, as learners, have a greater understanding of learning processes, they will have some control of how to organise and internalise knowledge. Understanding learning processes deepens the notion of independent learning. Meyer *et al* (2008) reviewed the literature associated with independent learning. This term draws on a wide range of learning contexts and definitions that Meyer *et al* link to 'self-regulation'. Adopting a methodology of self-regulation improves child motivation and leads to better management of independent learning. Meyer *et al* continued to link independent learning with personalised and student-centred practice. Their model requires cognitive skills including memory, metacognition and effectiveness to increase academic performance and evaluate self-management of learning limitations. Literature suggests that in order to promote independent learning, children should not work in isolation from the teacher, but work in partnership with them. Therefore, to immerse a child in independent learning, a teacher needs to identify with complex learning models, as it is unlikely all children will learn in the same way (Bullock and Wikeley, 2004).

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) identify children as organisms continually adapting to new environments. This is similar to the core of Piaget's cognitive model defining cognition as the adaptation between organism and environment (Meadows, 2010). However, socio-constructivist theories identify learners constructing knowledge and meaning for themselves. Learning is not a collection of facts, but a transformation of pre-existing knowledge. Such knowledge augments and extends itself during the momentum of schooling (Bullock and Wikeley, 2004). Therefore, for successful and continuous learning to take place, a child is required to transfer knowledge continually into new contexts. Barton (2007) reaffirms this debate by suggesting that, for effective 'independent' learning to develop, a child needs to be confident to learn, unlearn and relearn knowledge. Adopting such a model will ensure a successful transfer into a variety of new learning contexts, including the transfer between primary and secondary school.

However, this study revealed further barriers to a child's learning. In particular, it developed understanding of how mesosystems and microsystems interact with each other within a classroom environment. Data suggested that children identify with familiar learning opportunities and routines. These included the construction of informal rules, self-monitoring of progress, and engaging with dialogue to problem-solve. However, data also identified difficulties of continuation of such skills at the point of transfer. This section

diagnoses three potential issues: the impact of SATs; expectations of relationships between pupils and their teacher; and understanding relationships within the microsystems of classroom life.

### 6.3.1 Impact of SATs on a child's transition

SATs create a 'high stakes' culture where there is less emphasis on active learning and more time on instructive learning (Galton *et al*, 1999b). Bullock and Wikeley (2004) explored this concept, concluding that external tests at Key Stage 4 challenge the level of learning. Learning to answer test questions is based on a model of gaining, retaining and applying factual knowledge. This conclusion replicates the test culture in the final year of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. If learners have greater awareness of their learning processes, SATs then challenge the notion of independent learning. The three case studies indicated that two important issues arise during test preparation. The first concerns the amount of time a child spends listening passively in the classroom. The second questions the impact of SATs on the cognitive and language development that should support pupils' transferable and sustainable learning. Despite commonalities of procedures and practice, each case differed in their approach to SATs. This was determined by political pressures placed on cases to raise attainment beyond national benchmarks.

**Researcher:** Do you think SATs hinder progress or SATs contribute to progress?

**Senior Leadership Team 1:** For us, I think they hinder progress. I think because of the political climate of being an Academy we have got to get our grades up, so we have become narrow in our teaching, and we now have to teach to the test. It's as simple as that. And that inevitably means that those wider skills that are increasingly important as they go through the school [to GCSE and Post-16], from that perspective it narrows.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 Senior Leadership Team interview

Each case identified the urgency and need to raise standards of classroom practice, therefore maximising the success of their pupils. Case 3 used SATs to categorise confident and unconfident learners. Children labelled as 'able' were those who were continually achieving assessment Levels 4 and 5. Those 'borderline' children who achieved Levels 3 and 4 developed greater frustration in their learning. These children continually compared themselves to their 'more academic' peers and failed to identify personal progress they had made, therefore, SATs introduced learning segregation within classroom mesosystems. Inconsistencies of knowledge required for SATs contributed to gaps within some of the children's developing learning skills. Therefore, all children operated within discrete classroom cultures, with each categorised by their level of attainment.



**Researcher:** Do you think the children get frustrated with their learning within Year 6?

**Teacher 1:** They do. Once you start talking about SATs and start heading towards that way, then those that are able to and those that are going to get the Level 4 and Level 5's seem to flourish. They become more confident by starting to do the test and realise they're getting this, they're getting, they're getting this [ . . . ] The ones that are the border line - they might get [Level] 3 they might get [Level] 4 – you want to work really, really hard with them and they are the target children since September. It gets to the point where you have to try and encourage them to do it, and that's when they get most frustrated, because sometimes they can and sometimes they can't. It's the gaps in their knowledge and the gaps in their learning that is really evident, and they can see that they are looking up to their peers because they are being graded and given a level all the time.

**Case 3:** Year 6 teacher interview

Despite children working in segregated groups of ability, lesson observations suggested that children struggled to identify learning strategies enforced by consistent teacher routines in effective group work. Two conclusions were developed. Firstly, each observation identified the teacher physically moving into each group and contributed ideas to move the tasks forward. There was little child-teacher exchange that represented mutual discussion. Secondly, children continually raised hands to ask the teacher further questions to clarify instructions associated with the set task and to contribute to their ideas. However, in between teacher visitations, the children actively worked in groups promoting exploration and scaffolding ideas. Hence, with guided support from the teacher the children developed the ability to work independently for short periods. In addition, each case recognised the need for children to develop wider skills and expertise in learning. Some stakeholders acknowledged that learning how to learn, was for some children, more important than curriculum knowledge. The analysis concluded that without such skills, children would not be equipped for transfer and make sustainable progress.

Meyer *et al* (2008) claim that by the age of seven, children can construct language to problem-solve, and by the end of Year 6 children can describe how they learn. However, both Case 2 and Barton (2007) considered the dependent learning culture created by SATs highlighted the need for secondary schools to reverse taught habits of learning. Year 6 children were closely monitored in order to achieve targeted expectation. The sample children spoke of continuous SATs assessments and the continual pressures all classroom participants faced. In particular, under-rehearsed basic 'learning' skills led to children having difficulty in participating actively in exploratory learning environments. According to stakeholders and children, SATs removed the creativity out of a potentially exciting Year 6 curriculum.

**Teacher 1:** The theory behind [a Year 6 workshop] was that it was all about asking questions and being scientific and investigative. However, it was quite a challenge for the children [ . . . ] The

children found it quite difficult to ask the questions and when you unpicked it you could actually see they were quite used to being fairly passive. This is your learning objective; this is what you would learn; here's all the information for what we will learn; this is what you would do; and this is what you learnt – a standard lesson format. The activity I was in was all about bees. There was a beehive in the corner, there was some honeycomb, there were some flowers and there were other things and they basically had to look at the stuff and start asking questions about it. It was like a lesson backwards, which was quite a challenge.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 1 Year 6 teacher interview

Lesson observation data confirmed that there were commonalities across all cases with children listening passively to the teacher. Initial analysis of the data observed a substantial increase in teacher-talk, with children continually fed information to access activities that centred on initial learning objectives. Figure 6.1 compares learning talk across all cases. Case 2 lesson observation occurred during pre-SATs. There was a substantial increase of teacher-led talk as children were rehearsing literacy skills to access the SATs writing paper. The teacher continually delivered instruction that related to development of story themes and ideas. This was accompanied by levelling criteria to enhance the children's knowledge of SATs requirements. Throughout the activity, children were invited to give limited responses to subject-related questions before the activity moved on. However, for the majority of the lesson, the children were passive recipients of information.

**Teacher 1:** Shall I do this with you because it's looking really good . . . 'The fairy godmother said, "You have to be back by 12" '. So if we slow things down a bit here, and we know that speech marks is good Level 4 stuff, where would we pop in the speech marks to make it a Level 4? 'The fairy godmother said "You have to be back by 12." '

**Child: (Puts speech marks as directed by the teacher)**

**Teacher 1:** That's fab. He got to the football match and when . . . that's it. Because sometimes when you read it out aloud in your head like that you can sometimes hear the gaps and if I say and keeps scoring, I mean he kept scoring . . . excellent . . . and you've done speech marks here. Excellent.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 2 Year 6 lesson observation

It is recognised good practice for children to know their level of attainment, and strategies and criteria for moving to the next level. However, within the externally test-driven culture of Year 6, children identify progression with knowledge rather than independent learning ability. Lesson observations suggested that teachers drive talk to encourage learning, rather than talk driving learning amongst social participants.

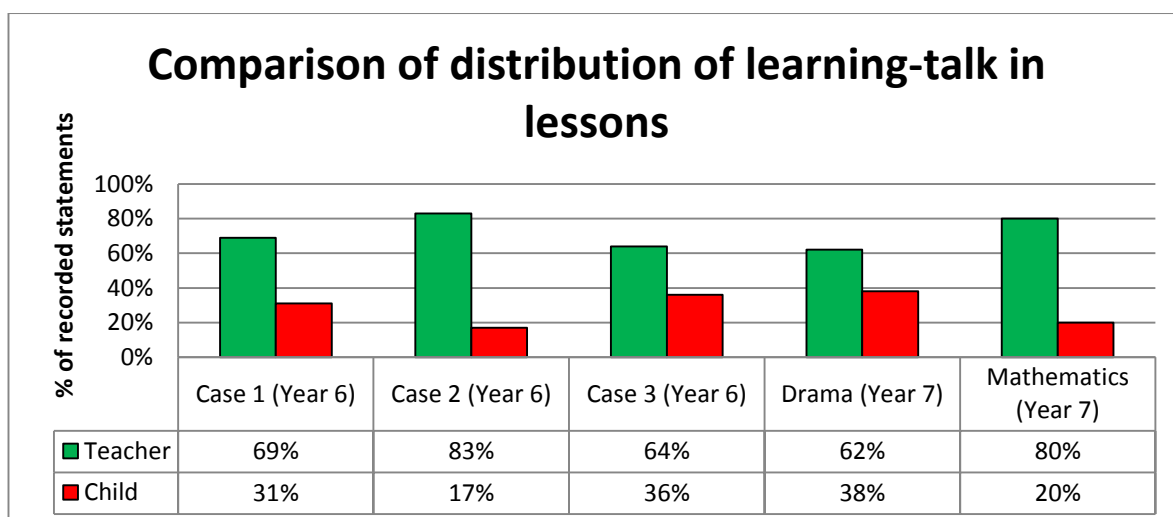
The mathematics lesson in Year 7 replicated that of Case 2's Year 6 observed English lesson. Teach-talk dominated the lesson with 80% of recorded comments. The observation was based in the 'Home' curriculum where children's needs were met within a

primary-style classroom. Such children had 60% of their timetable with the same teacher. Therefore, the expectation was that teaching and learning strategies would mirror each other between phases. The lesson was level-driven as the teacher needed to raise attainment in order to maximise future success of the children. Strategies included mutually shared development assessment criteria based on the primary model. The starter activity was for children to decipher their working assessment level against recent test results.

**Teacher:** I was really pleased with what you did on the test yesterday and I've entered that onto the system already. As far as I can think every single one of you did either as well or better than you did last time - which is absolutely brilliant. Some of you have achieved really high levels and you all achieved the levels I expected of you, which is **(thumbs up)** really excellent. What we're going to do is have your feedback on how well you think the test went. So you've all got one of these sheets, unless you weren't here for the test, with your answers on. What I want you to do is to give yourself a score for the test. I want you to add up all the ticks I put in. So you give yourself a score out of 10 that goes in the total then and you're going to match that up to a level which you can see on the board and find out what level you've got. So for example if you got four right, you got 2b, and if you got seven right, you got 3a and so on.

**Phase 3:** 'Home' curriculum Year 7 mathematics lesson

The quotation highlights similarities of talk to those recorded in the Year 6 lessons. The dialogue offers a wealth of instructions to which the children listen passively. Instructions are assessment-driven and require little response. Therefore, there is no initial mutual engagement between participants. However, the teacher continually uses effective praise with the children to acknowledge that they achieved above expectation. The lesson developed into teacher-led explanation; children reinterpreting the explanation either on the interactive whiteboard or in exercise books; and evaluating whether their responses were correct. Pressure between the primary and secondary environments did not differ. Both focused on raising academic attainment to ensure children achieved targeted levels, without instilling independent learning skills to enhance future progression.



**Figure 6.2:** Lesson observations – comparison of distribution of learning-talk between teacher and children

Meyer *et al* (2008) defined metacognitive skills as the ability to listen, remember and apply previously learnt knowledge in a variety of learning environments. If Year 6 children have the ability to describe and understand how they learn, they also have the ability to operate successfully within transferable mesosystems and microsystems. However, if skills are continually teacher-initiated and under-rehearsed, their definition narrows. Lesson observations suggested that children had the ability to listen to the teacher and to draw on prior knowledge to answer questions when prompted. Despite observed learning being mostly inactive, children were taught different skills to access and answer test questions. All sample children felt prepared for their SATs and complimented their Year 6 teachers for ensuring that they were confident throughout the testing period. However, children had rehearsed using past test papers, and some had pre-empted answers. In class, children could solve mathematical problems and recall key points from stories confidently. Once in the test rooms, children challenged their own learned knowledge. Changing mesosystems, from the informal to formal environments, diminished confidence, with children questioning their own ability and answers. The securities of commonality of classroom participation were removed, and the role of known professional stakeholders had changed. Children responded negatively to non-verbal cues. The analysis not only questioned children's ability to transfer knowledge between mesosystems, but also identified habitual learning behaviours developed by their class teacher.

**Child 3:** I tried to put myself not under pressure with SATs because we've done the practice tests so I learned how to do it, so when it came to actual SATs paper I was just thinking to myself 'that's a normal test, not the real test'

**Child 5:** I thought it was quite easy in SATs, because when you do all the practice tests you're not in different rooms you're all in one room. But when you did your SATs we're all put into little groups and it was really weird because I only knew half the people [ . . . ]

**Child 2:** You're just like . . . it's just weird because you're used to having the whole class with you and you don't feel as if there's just one person looking at you and the teacher will just sit and look at you and I want them to stop looking at me 'cos they put me off.

**Child 1:** When you find something really hard you feel as if they're looking at you saying 'but that's easy'. Or 'Oh my God, you've got it wrong' and then you look down and you think 'It looks right'.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 student voice activity

At the start of the transfer period, teachers spoke little of SATs. They were not dismissive of external tests, but wanted to ensure children developed sufficient learning skills to access papers. Therefore, for some professional stakeholders SATs were an independent calendared activity. For the children, worries about SATs began at the start of Year 6. At the start, they recognised that teachers rarely referred to SATs, but acknowledged early test processes of preparation. However, as the academic year progressed pressures associated with SATs intensified within the quality of relationships forged in the learning mesosystems. Cases 2 and 3 systematically categorised children according to level-assessed tasks. This was not deemed to be detrimental to the children's learning development, but improved academic progress and success. As a result, SATs heavily influenced the sample children's view of learning during Year 6. Case 1 teachers attempted to merge the requirements of SATs within the children's curriculum entitlement. Early pressures stemmed from issuing 'trickier vocabulary mathematics books' and an intensive revision programme from March to May of Year 6. Despite the amalgamation of anxieties promoted within class mesosystems, Cases 1 and 3 could not understand the influence that SATs had on their early secondary school career. Case 1 claimed that post-transfer secondary school teachers did not recognise the importance of the testing regime. They dismissed SATs as primary schools spending too much time rehearsing test questions.

**Child 6:** [Secondary school teachers] just go on about how inaccurate they are and you spend too much time preparing for them when it should just test you there and then, but they need to see how much we've retained that and how much we've kept that because we had to learn all that.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Conclusions from this study identify SATs as a dominant factor within a child's learning journey during the transfer period. Analysis suggested that this is comparable to Bullock and Wikeley's (2004) perception of the challenge on learning during Key Stage 4 examinations. Each case stressed the contribution of SATs to a shared dependency on

learning between teacher and child. It is suggested that an intrinsic dependency can hinder learning relationships within each mesosystem, and remove tools of learning within microsystems. This could explain the concept that initial roles of secondary schools are to 'reverse' dependent learning habits by minimising the impact of SATs on a child's learning. If a teacher's role is to promote confidence in children's cultural learning development, then it is necessary to broaden a child's cognitive, memory and attentive skills (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1992). These skills will equip a child to interact socially within a variety of learning mesosystems and microsystems. Unfortunately, analysis suggested that throughout the transfer period, SATs narrowed the development of such skills. This therefore, lead to the conclusions that children did not have the ability to transfer knowledge gained through test preparation across other curriculum areas.

### **6.3.2 Expectations of relationships between teacher and child**

Recent studies suggest that children have little opportunity to engage in discussion and questioning with their primary teacher (Galton *et al* 1999b; Evangelou *et al*, 2008). As a result, the teacher-child relationship is asymmetric (Mercer and Wegerif, 2004). Muschamp and Bullock (2007) argue that a child's dependency on their teacher has the potential to be problematic throughout their schooling. Therefore, they question the teacher's ability to motivate some children who continually lack incentive in their learning. According to Meyer *et al* (2008), motivation is the most important attribute to successful learning. However, motivation is not independent of context. It is a product of personality, and effective teaching and learning relationships (Galloway *et al*, 1998). On the other hand, Vygotsky (1987) claims that socio-cultural settings in which children learn are 'mutually' and actively created by teacher and pupil. Each setting identifies spoken and hidden codes of language that support and challenge a child in learning situations (Moll and Whitmore, 2006). Previous research supports the view that children want to succeed (Bullock and Wikeley, 2004; Galton *et al*, 1999b), but, the study suggests that children do not know how to go about it. The children were motivated to do well academically, though. There was some evidence that children recognised a relationship between success and social tools they had developed. To deepen the understanding of learning relationships on a child's learning independence, it is essential to understand the effects on relationships situated within differing learning environments.

Research identifies five successful characteristics for influential learning that contribute to teacher-child relationships within the classroom (Azmitia, 2006; Meyer *et al*,

2008). Table 6.1 summarises these. Each characteristic is influenced by language ability and confidence within learning situations. Delamont and Galton (1996) associate high confidence with high attainment. Therefore, successful learners need to work in highly literate contexts to maximise learning success. However, transition needs to consider children who are unmotivated and find learning challenging. Galloway (1998) identifies a 'learnt helplessness' defining children who are unable to complete a task and will always assume they are unable to complete it. Such children have increased anxiety in learning environments. It is not a case of children 'switching off', but of having developed self-defence mechanisms to justify their learning (or lack of it). These behaviours will reduce effort and performance, and can prevent children acknowledging what they have already learnt (Galloway, 1998).

Lesson observations across all cases witnessed children who were highly motivated and those who considered learning a challenge. Motivated learners responded to a range of contexts situated in whole class and group work. These children contributed to discussions and led effective group work. The example below is part of a teacher-led discussion at the start of the lesson. The teacher has insisted on 'hands-down' to enable the teacher to select respondents. Despite using direct questions, Children 1 and 2 answer confidently using subject-specific terminology, suggesting learners are actively involved in discussion and are willing to contribute effectively.

**Teacher:** Your questionnaire that you then turned into what? So that's the ballot box idea please. Yes?

**Child 1:** Market research.

**Teacher:** Brilliant. And what form is your market research in at the moment in your folders? What form is it in? [Name]?

**Child 2:** A pie chart.

**Teacher:** Yes. A pie chart. In a chart.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Within the same discussion, the teacher interchanges hands-down with hands-up. The same children within the class continually put their hands up to answer questions. However, the teacher uses two strategies to invite less confident children into the discussion. The first attempts to remove anxiety from a child who cannot answer the series of questions. However, throughout the exchange the same child does not contribute. The teacher asks whether the child is happy to go to another member of the class. The respondents are then the children who continually put up their hands. The second prepares

the child to answer by stating 'you will be after this person.' However, the child did not participate within the discussion.

**Teacher:** What did you do in the end with that information? You looked at it and I said it's all very [well] you showing me this information but what does it mean? You then did a? [Name]? What did you do afterwards? You had to do a . . . ? You got a set of results. What do we do when you have a set of results? Shall I go to somebody else? Are you happy for me to go to somebody else?

[ . . . ]

We've got so far loan applications, advertisements, what other jobs have you got on your Steps to Success lists, please? Come on, please, everybody's got their Steps of Success in front of them so there should be no reason why your hands are down. [Name] I'll be coming to you for the next answer because you haven't had your hand up yet this morning. OK. You'll be after this person.

#### **Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

In comparison, group tasks defined complex relationships between participants. In each observation, participant children transferred oral instruction, teacher-led knowledge and task sequences to complete work set successfully. These components were further categorised using characteristics contained in Table 6.1. Understanding the emergent inter-relationships of learning participants contained within the lesson observations and independent learning activity will further define learners in terms of confidence and motivation. The analysis is not to define each characteristic, but to compare each in formal and informal learning activities. This interpretation begins the construction of learner profiles during the transition period.

Scaffolding a task involves a relationship between 'novice' and 'expert'. The 'expert' structures a concept sufficiently for the 'novice' to complete a task that would otherwise be beyond them (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999). Within the classroom, it is an expectation that the 'expert' is the teacher, and the 'novice' the child. In the lessons observed, teachers defined concepts either by stepped questions, or modelling expectations. The following example is part of a group presentation to the class. The children were required to justify why they selected a photograph and give an in-depth analysis using art keywords. Initially, the children explained to the class that they 'liked' the photograph and ended the presentation. Teacher 1 modelled the expectation by adopting the role of the child. The use of 'we' instantly placed the teacher within the context of the group. The teacher furthered the presentation claiming that 'I really like this picture' and then proceeded with questions to ensure understanding of key elements. The questions were scaffold with the children first defining the term vibrant, and then placing the term in the context of vibrancy associated



with a child's play area. As a result, the 'novice' rapidly moved to 'expert', with increased motivation to present a further picture to the class.

**(Children present their PowerPoint presentations to the class. They had selected two photographs to analyse)**

**Teacher 1:** We did this photo because it's got like the shape and got like the texture, well it's got a little bit of texture, not much, and it's got colour too. I really like this picture because of the texture and the colour and the shape.

**Teacher 2:** What about the colours? What is it?

**Child 1:** They're really bright.

**Child 2:** They've not dull colours, they're very bright colours.

**Teacher 2:** What was the word? What was the word?

**Child 2:** Vibrant.

**Teacher 2:** Vibrant. Very good. Why do they stand out so much? Go back to that picture for me. Why are those colours so vibrant?

**Child 2:** Because like . . .

**Child 1:** Because they're for children.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Teacher	Learner
<b>Scaffold:</b> ensure successful learning outcomes	<b>Scaffold:</b> expert peer as mentor.
<b>Language:</b> develop language focused on learning.	<b>Language:</b> engage in lively discussion.
<b>Assessment:</b> provide effective feedback on classwork and homework.	<b>Assessment:</b> develop language for learning.
<b>Behaviour:</b> positive role models on behaviour.	<b>Behaviour:</b> imitate strategies of others.
<b>Motivate:</b> provide children with capacity to self-monitor.	<b>Motivate:</b> willingness to tackle challenging tasks.

**Table 6.1:** Successful characteristics to influence learning relationships

There was a distinct difference between primary and secondary lessons' use of scaffolding. The previous example was characteristic of the primary setting. Teachers used a combination of modelling and questioning each time the 'novice' required guidance to complete a task successfully. Lessons observed in the secondary phase used stepped questioning. The following example is from a Year 7 mathematics lesson on fractions, decimals and percentages. The children received instructions as a whole class and then worked individually on a short series of mathematical problems. One child struggled with the concept of 25% and was unsure whether to add or subtract it from 50%. Initially the child withdrew from the activity. The anxiety of not understanding resulted in the emergence of self-defence mechanisms (Galloway, 1998). The child shrugged shoulders not as a

reduction of effort, but as a gesture to withdraw from the task. In addition, the child cannot acknowledge previous learning. The teacher signposted the child by stating, 'The answer is there, you've already done the working out.' This ensured success with the problem. Throughout the exchange, the teacher checked continually for understanding, and, by developing a series of questions, confirmed the process was internalised. The child continued with the series of questions unprompted.

**Child:** If 50% of 100 is 50, then do I need to add on 25% to get 25%?

**Teacher:** Not quite. Let's have a look. So you've correctly worked out 50% so let's do the whole thing here which is £100. You've correctly worked out that half of £100 is 50, yes? So what's a quarter? What do we need to do to a half to get a quarter?

**Child: (Shrugs shoulders)**

**Teacher:** Can you draw a line on this to divide it in to quarters? Draw a line on that circle to divide it into four quarters

**Child:** What. Like that?

**Teacher:** Yes, brilliant. So, if we know that each side is 50 then you've just cut it in half again. What's going to go into each of those two bits?

**Child:** 50

**Teacher:** That's half.

**Child:** 25

**Teacher:** Yes. So 25% of 100 is . . . we've divided the shape into quarters. Here's one quarter or 25% what number is it?

**Child: (Shrugs shoulders)**

**Teacher:** The answer is there, you've already done the working out.

**Child:** So it's 50 there.

**Teacher:** That's right and you've divided that into quarters so you . . .

**Child:** Is the answer 25?

**Teacher:** Yes. Well done.

#### **Case 2:** Phase 3 mathematics lesson observation

During informal learning activities, there was an expectation that children would adopt learning strategies deployed by their class teacher. Each case used styles of scaffolding found in their classroom environment. The independent learning activity involved the sample children constructing a prototype with little support from an adult. Children were given broad instructions and were then required to design and construct their own interpretation of the activity. During the planning discussion all sample children contributed ideas. However, a smaller proportion of the group synthesised suggestions in order to progress the task. Child 1 combined elements of scaffolding to model and question for understanding. As a result, using prior knowledge and understanding, Child 1 became the 'expert' of the group. The child modelled the shapes required using hands, rather than giving lengthy descriptions. Combining modelling, question and instruction techniques Child 1 ensured that the decisions made were understood. Replicating the classroom, there were similarities between using gesture and short questions in order to 'make sense' of ideas.

**(Children discussing the base of the raft)**

**Child 1:** I know what we could do. We could put these like this and we need two of the same length. **(Reaches for the straws and pipe cleaner and demonstrates what is meant)** We put them like that except for the smallest. If you get the straws to go like that. **(Using hands to make a triangle)** The boat sides needs to go like this. **(Uses hands to make an inverted triangle)**

**Child 2:** So where is it . . . If we put it like that . . . so can I have the sellotape please?

**Child 1:** Which one of the straws is the smallest?

**Child 3:** This one.

**Child 1:** So we need that. **(Picks up a straw)** And then you need two of the other ones because you need the same each side.

**Child 2:** [Child 1] Do these look the same to you?

**Child 1:** Yeh. I hate it when I don't make sense.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Phase 3 highlighted distinct changes with task completion and, in particular, the use of scaffolding. Compared to Phase 2 where children quickly defined systems based on classroom experience to aid task progression, during Phase 3, discussions in Cases 1 and 2 resulted in potential 'experts' working independently. There was little synthesis of ideas and the sample children adopted a collective hands-on approach. There were few examples of modelling, and questions developed into instruction. This contributed to the varying successes of each task.

**(Children discussing the structure and base of the tower)**

**Child 5:** No, a good tower goes up like that **(hands apart)**, and then like that **(hands pointed)**. It makes it stronger by having a point.

**Child 6:** That's what I said.

**Child 4:** Right we need to secure it. That seems to work like that . . . that goes there . . . that goes there and it should work.

**Child 3:** All you have to do is join it together like that.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

However, Case 2 adopted similar attributes to that of Phase 2. The use of gesture modelled different stages of the construction. For example, Child 3 sketched the letter 'A' on the table. Information was then synthesised using questions to ensure resources were accurately used as the task progressed. The sample children were motivated and confidently completed the task set. As a result, Case 2 developed the better design and prototype, as the tower stood unaided.

**Child 3:** So that's one floor. You better look after the sellotape. **(Passes sellotape to Child 4)** You 2 had better try a sample of how it's done. **(Connects the floor to the structure)** [ . . . ] The next layer you need to divide it into a quarter to make the A. **(Draws out on the table)**

**Child 4:** What do you want us to do? Snap them in half?

**Child 1:** So they're equal.

**Child 3:** More or less.

**Child 5:** Is that in the middle?

**Child 3:** Yes, it doesn't have to be exact.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

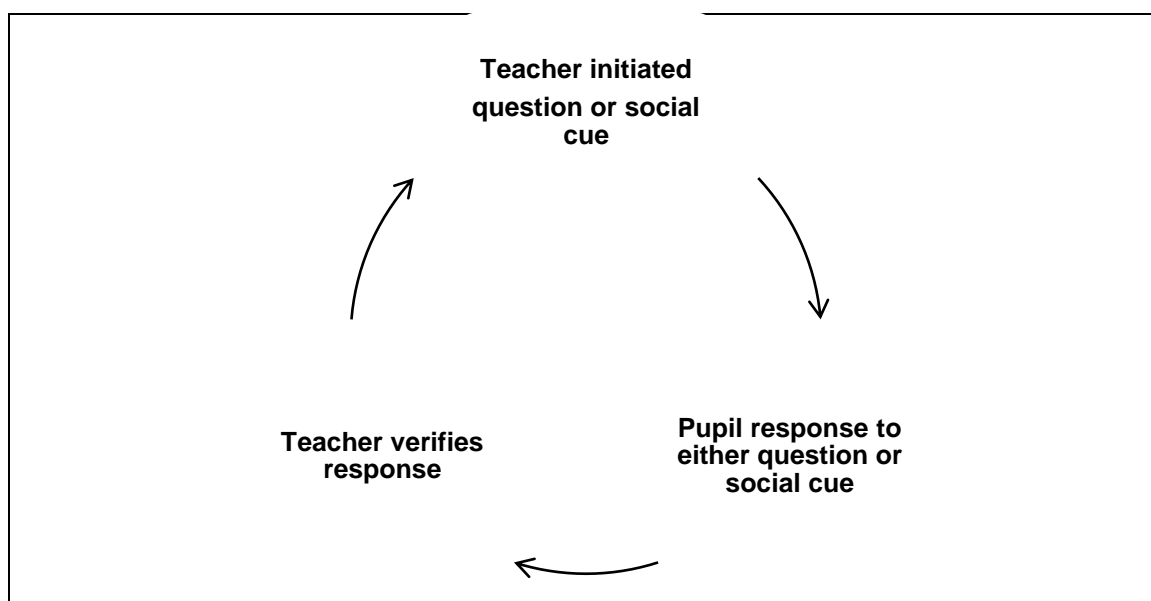
It can be argued that there is a correlation between children developing a concise language for learning, and academic success. Confident discourse will allow children to participate in lively debates within the classroom. Therefore, children need to understand mechanisms of learning in order to internalise knowledge and transfer it into different contexts. The study suggests abridged classroom language due to the impact of SATs. Lessons observations concluded that children could pinpoint occurrences in lessons by recognising starters, tasks and plenaries, but relied on teachers to engage in learning discourse. All cases highlighted an extended introduction to the lesson. This was teacher-led and structured between extended instruction and questions to support understanding. Children were invited to participate by clarifying instruction, definitions of key words and limited recall on previous lessons.

**Teacher 1:** You are creating a little tiny PowerPoint, which you are able to talk about using selected images. How you do the PowerPoint is up to you. I'm not going to say that you are going to need to have six slides or seven slides, or do it one particular way or another, that [is] the choice you've got to make. You can have all of your pictures on one [Name] or are you going to have one slide per picture. This is entirely up to you. But you need to be able to do what [Name] has just talked about and explain why you have chosen those particular images you use, and what it is about them you really like. I will say you will need to have about five or six different slides so you need to sort of think about which ones you've chosen and why. But how you do the PowerPoint is entirely up to you. But do not get hung up on doing the PowerPoint presentation by thinking 'I'm going to have lots of animation; I'm going to lots of design on my background.' Do the images first and then have a think about it because you've only got about 20 minutes to get all of the images onto PowerPoint. So, let's see [Name] what do you have to do?

**Child:** You've got to look at your photos and decide which ones you're going to use for your PowerPoint and then you've got to add some different designs . . . You then have to decide why you chose them and what you think about them.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Phase 2 conversations between teacher and child were characterised by the teacher modelling and signalling conversation cues. For example, teachers used direct questions and oral cues. Teachers verifying, or consolidating responses then reinforced these. Conversation cycles, Figure 6.3 were identified consistently between teacher-child dialogues.



**Figure 6.3:** Learning conversation cycle

Cycle	Conversation sequence
<b>Question</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> In paragraph 4 Cinderella goes to the ball. She's told by her fairy godmother that she has to leave by midnight or the magic is going to go and it won't work after midnight. At the ball she's having a fantastic time and she sees the clock which is about to strike midnight and she runs down the stairs, she sprints off because she doesn't want to turn into her rags in front of everybody. She feels . . . but how would she feel?
<b>Response</b>	<b>Child 1:</b> Embarrassed.
<b>Verification</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> Embarrassed.
<b>Question</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> Can anybody think of other words that describe embarrassed?
<b>Response</b>	<b>Child 2:</b> Humiliated.
<b>Verification</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> Humiliated was the work that was in my head.
<b>Cue</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> Yes she would feel so humiliated, so embarrassed. Mortified.
<b>Response</b>	<b>Child 3:</b> Destroyed.
<b>Verification</b>	<b>Teacher:</b> Destroyed. Yeah. Horrified. She would feel so bad and so she scuttles off, maybe even races off, which would be a better idea.

**Table 6.2:** Conversation cycle (Case 2, Phase 2 lesson observation)

Table 6.2 records a conversation sequence taken from the start of the Case 2 lesson observation. The children developed a story structured on the fairy tale, Cinderella. The teacher engaged the class in a discussion prompting for descriptive words to describe feelings. As with Cases 1 and 3, children contributed short utterances into the discussion cycle. The teacher then verified each response by directly repeating vocabulary used. As the sequence developed, children confidently placed words into longer phrases. However, the phrases used never completed full sentences. This sequence identified dependency on the teacher. Children were motivated to contribute, but lacked confidence to articulate and extend responses.

Evaluation is immersed within language for learning. In order for children to develop independent learning, it is essential they understand how their work is assessed and develop evaluative strategies to reflect on their own work. Despite the sample children's Year 6 learning being driven by SATs, there was little evidence in lesson observations to suggest that children knew their working and target levels. Teachers made minimal references to levelling or suggestions about how children could improve their work to move to the next level. Phase 3 lesson observations identified more rigidity associated with levels. In the mathematics lesson, the teacher used a range of strategies to develop children's understanding of their working level and strategies to progress further. These included children levelling their own work within a given formula and moving through traffic-light systems of questions where each colour was associated with different levels. Children did not question the differentiation technique and the majority continually aimed for 'green.'

**Teacher:** We are going to move on to the independent work now guys and I've graded it down to your green, orange and red, and I'll explain it before we get started and look at the questions. Everyone in here – and you have pretty much shown me already that you can complete this – so by the end of the lesson everyone in here will be able to apply confidently 50%, 25% and 75% of whole numbers, just like we were doing on the board. Most of you are going to be able to find 50%, 25% and 75% of numbers involving decimals. So I might say find me 50% of £2.50, so we're getting into slightly more difficult territory there. So some of you could find more complex percentages, so I might be asking you to find 12% of a number, or 80% of a number, or something like that, which is a lot more difficult. If you get to that put your hand up and I'll come and show you how it works, and then I want you to just jump off into it.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 mathematics lesson observation

Levelling criteria signposted the drama lesson observed. The teacher refocused the class using assessment-driven language to equip the children with relevant skills to evaluate group and performance work. Unlike the mathematics lesson, the criteria were spoken verbatim.

**Teacher:** In drama when you get to a bit higher level you actually get graded on saying 'I don't like that idea. How about we do it this way?' OK. If you're not happy with an idea somebody suggested, don't go, 'Oh that's rubbish' just kind of go, 'How about we do it this way as well, we'll try this way'.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson observation

Strategies associated with independent learning acknowledge that for independence children need to develop tools to evaluate and refine their work (Meyer *et al*, 2008). Phase 2 lesson observations offered few opportunities for the children to assess and evaluate their work. However, Phase 3 identified strategies for children to develop confidence in their own ability by peer assessment and self-evaluation. The example is taken from a dialogue sequence between a table group. Child 1 has completed the required elements of the set task and was asked to mark other children's work within the table group. The child did not share the answers from the exercise book and imitated teacher strategies. Firstly Child 1 clarified understanding of work by checking whether Child 2 had written '0.75', and then verbalised correct answers. Finally, Child 1 used praise for correct work. The recipient acknowledged this praise.

**Teacher:** You've got all the correct answers. Can you go and check [Child 2] for me? Thank you

**Child 1:** There you go. That one's right and that one.

**Child 2: (Ticks answers)** Have I got that one?

**Child 1:** It should be 3. **(Child 2 changes answer)** That's right, that's right, that's right. Is that 0.75?

**Child 2:** Yep.

**Child 1:** That's right, that's right. You've got them all right. **(Moves to Child 3)**

**Child 3:** Are these right?

**Child 1:** That's right, that's not

**Child 3:** You're so dumb

**Child 1:** It needs to be this. That's right. Well done.

**Child 3: (Ticks answers)** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Thank you.

**Phase 3:** Case 2 mathematics lesson observation

Data analysed from the independent learning activity suggested a reversal of findings from the lesson observations. For children to complete the required elements of the task they were required to work independently as a group and not rely on teacher intervention. Phase 2 analysis concluded that children had the required independent skills to create a successful prototype. Throughout the activity, children developed coherent plans and reflected on each stage of construction before progressing to the next. Learning dialogue articulated different viewpoints before group consensus was achieved.

**Child 7:** To use five things to make it we could use stuff like pompoms to decorate it because they're not heavy, are they?

**Child 4:** Yes, but [the researcher] said we could use this for something. **(Picks up a fabric square).**

**Child 3:** We could stick it on top of the pots.

**Child 7:** Yeah, we could use these, **(picks up a handful of straws)** and you put this [fabric] over them and over them and spread them out and put these together [yogurt pots].

**Child 4:** They won't stick down like that.

**Child 6:** I've got an idea. We could get a load of straws and sellotape them together like that.

**Child 7:** Yes, to keep the buoyancy we're using these [yogurt pots] to keep it afloat.

**Child 6:** We just need to put the pot like that. **(Turns yogurt pot upside down on the table and places straws on top of it)**

**Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

However, during Phase 3, Cases 1 and 3 offered little reflection and evaluation within the activity. Despite children developing tools in the classroom to assess and peer-assess work, there were few examples that contributed to the overall success of the task. Decisions relied on a single participant rather than a collective group.

**Child 5:** I know what we could do.

**Child 2:** If we did an 'X' like that and then a floor like that.

**Child 4:** Would that count as a floor? Or we could do lots of squares and build them on top of each other.

**Child 3:** Right. Let's lay it out. **(Lays the pasta on the table)**

**Child 4:** Everyone listen to [Child 3].

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Hargreaves and Galton (2002) conclude that apparent dips in motivation during the transfer period are triggered by curriculum delivery of low-level tasks; few opportunities for children to engage in discussion; and slower-paced lessons. However, this analysis suggested that positive-behaviour role models within the classroom and group activities also required consideration. Case studies concluded that effective learning development required consistency of classroom routines and learning structures created by the teacher and peers. There was a distinct difference between the effects of positive behaviour and learning relationships formed within different contexts. For example, Phase 2 lesson observations addressed individual behaviours by reminding individual children of their contribution to low-level disruption. Teachers counteracted this by praising and thanking individual children for following instruction.

**Teacher 1:** Turn round and face this way. Turn. 3-2-1 zero. Well done [Name], [Name], well done [Name]. Five [rewards] each. Well done [Name]. [Name] why are you stood up over there for? That's better.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation



Lessons observed post-transfer sanctioned groups of children for individual behaviours. Instead of complimenting good behaviours, there was more focus on negative outcomes. In Phase 2 slight disruptions were swiftly dealt with using a sequence of naming, reminding and thanking the child. There was little evidence of using this sequence in Phase 3. Behaviours were labelled in front of the whole class without using specific names or thanks. As a result, poor behaviours only stopped temporarily and there was no resolution between teacher and child.

**Teacher:** Boys can you explain to me why you are all mucking about on the floor. You're on one report, two reports, do you think you're going to have a tick for listening and following instructions? Do you think you're going to get a tick for that?

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson observation

The development of classroom relationships is complex. Data discussed support the view that for successful learning children are required to operate within highly literate contexts (Moll and Whitmore, 2006). However, literacy manifests itself in a child's written and oral ability. The expectation is that children engage in learning groups to access and internalise knowledge. Therefore, a child's contribution can be characterised as both 'novice' and 'expert', depending on the nature and purpose of the activity. Conclusions from the case studies highlight the teacher as 'expert' in all things related to the classroom environment. However, the characteristics of learning suggested in Table 6.1 confirm similarities of learning roles between teacher and child. Data suggest that the key difference is that the teacher can be categorised as the 'motivator' of learning that provides a frame for a child to be 'motivated' within learning. Successful transition identifies children who are both motivated and confident learners. This analogy questions the effect of transition on vulnerable groups of children who find it challenging to form effective relationships and develop basic skills to operate and sustain learning in differing contexts. Therefore, the data acknowledge that successful learners operate successfully as both 'novice' and 'expert', compared to vulnerable learners who adopt a singular role as 'novice'. Each will have a significant impact on hierarchical relationships developed within a microsystem.

### **6.3.3 Hierarchical relationships within microsystems**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) categorises a child's ability to learn in two discrete, but related systems. The mesosystem identifies holistic learning within the child's classroom

environment. The microsystem places the child in the immediate situation of learning. Piaget (1954) suggests that a child's construction of reality is observed in verbal and non-verbal behaviours. Therefore, the four elements of the microsystem concern, (i) learning activity, (ii) roles, and (iii) relationships linked together by (iv) a common language. Each element is guided by a code for social behaviour that mutually supports and encourages participants, and ensures guidance and 'correction' (Foreman and Cazden, 1985). Throughout each key stage, there is an expectation that children gain independence to develop and transfer understanding of key concepts across subject areas. Therefore, teachers provide effective skills and learning experience to promote independence and understanding, and children participate in classroom environments to internalise, sustain and implement new knowledge. As a result, microsystems operate as multiple sub-systems between which children and their teachers move. Further consideration of 'novice' and 'expert' relationships contained within learning microsystems will allow for greater understanding of how children develop and select tools for independent learning. The analysis considers whether this is dependent on their socio-cultural learning setting.

Lesson observation analysis considered dyadic and triadic relationships within group work. Each lesson identified different learning objectives and activities. Therefore, initial deliberation situated analysis in independent activity clusters. However, commonalities across all activities emerged and removed the notion that asymmetric relationships were activity dependent, with roles and learning relationships dominating microsystem development. All lesson activities identified changing hierarchical relationships with that of teacher-pupil being the constant. Data suggested that the teacher continually moved and engaged in learning microsystems by advising groups, or coercing groups into refining and detailing their work. The first example considers the teacher as 'advisor'. The child adopts the role of 'novice' by requesting explanation of a term. Initially the child placed the definition into their cultural understanding by likening a heart monitor to a 'computer game.' The teacher identified the term as 'monitor' and gave an abridged definition ensuring the child not only understood the term, but also could place it in the correct context. The short exchange identified the activity as selecting an appropriate term. The role of the teacher is defined as 'expert' to select and define the correct terminology, and the child's role changed from 'novice' to 'expert' by clarifying the heart monitor not as a computer game, but a 'flat-line.' As a result, the change within the learning relationship allowed the child to progress with the required task.

**(Working in table groups writing the next paragraph of the re-write of Cinderella)**

**Child:** What's that thing when you're in hospital?

**Teacher:** Say that again.

**Child:** You know like those computer games that you can see and play on it.

**Teacher:** What the monitor? Like those things that you plug onto your heart and you can the lines going up and down. It's called a heart monitor.

**Child:** It can tell whether you're dead

**Teacher:** Yep. It goes beep, beep, beeeep.

**Child:** A flat line

**Teacher:** A flat line. Yes.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 lesson observation.

The analysis considered learning progression within the microsystem if the 'expert' reverted to 'novice'. The next sequence of dialogue initially identified the teacher adopting the role of 'expert'. However, the teacher had difficulties spelling 'limousine.' The asymmetrical dyad reverted into a mutually constructed 'novice-to-novice' relationship by the teacher suggesting that they 'look together' for the correct spelling. Despite the teacher suggesting strategies to spell the word, the role of 'novice' continued as each strategy did not come to fruition. Therefore, the reversal of role prohibited the task from progressing.

**Teacher:** How we doing? "The giant went to the party in his giant limousine". If you didn't know how to spell it what would you do then? Because I think if we look together, because I'm with you and I don't know how to spell it, let's find lim . . . if I sound lim- and look here . . . right. I'm really struggling here. Limousine. How does it start?

**Child 2:** L- I- M- E.

**Teacher:** L- I- M- E . . . is not here. Right we have to be a bit more creative here. Do you think that I would be a cheat if I tried to write it into a Word document for it to show me how it should be spelled?

**Child 2:** Yes.

**Teacher:** So if you go and do that now . . . or we could put a 'sp' by that and we can check it out in a wee bit, because I want that to be right. If you guess and I guess then it could mess up your work and we don't want that.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Throughout the observations children settled into group tasks. There was little movement between groups, with the exception of teacher input. Consistent organisation of microsystems developed across all participating groups. Despite children working at various stages within activities, adoption of roles and relationships replicated those between teacher and pupil. Analysis suggested that basic 'expert' and 'novice' roles did not interchange between participants. The hierarchy moved tasks forward. For example, the following sequence identified Child 1 as 'expert'. Child 1 organised the task by ensuring that Child 2 had relevant information and sufficient knowledge. The initial learning activity involved Child 2 writing a short analysis of the various graphs. The role of 'expert' did not change. However, after instruction and demonstration, the role of Child 2 changed from 'novice' to 'expert' at the point where the child wrote independently. The 'expert' did not

dominate the relationship, but mutually evolved using consistent language associated with the learning objectives.

**Child 1:** We need to decide . . .

**Child 2:** We've got this you know. **(Flicking through pages of the book)**

**Child 1:** I know . . . I don't know whether it's got custard in it . . . analysis **(counting pages of work with various graphs on)** we've got loads right now . . . OK? [Child 2] you need to write the analysis here **(shows Child 2 where it should go)**, OK? Just there. It's the measure of the . . . um . . . it is . . . there are various things we need for our pound . . . and they are here. **(Pointing to graph)**

**Child 2:** Shall I just put, 'This is just a guide'?

**Child 1:** From this information you can see that . . . Do you know what to write? I'll just get some rulers from over there.

**Child 2:** Yes. **(Begins to write)**

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation.

Conflict within this developed microsystem occurred when a new participant entered. Later in the lesson, the teacher visited the developed microsystem of Children 1 and 2 illustrated above. The 'teacher-expert' role compared to that of Child 1. As a result, Child 1 instinctively reverted into 'novice' by justifying work that needed completion. The teacher identified improvements and suggestions by questioning and modelling ideas. Once the teacher left, Child 1 attempted to reassert his previous role by instructing Child 2 to open the letter, and stating that 'I'll finish it off.' Unfortunately, Child 1 concluded that there was insufficient information to write the letter, and progression with the task ceased. The reversal from 'expert' to 'novice' replicated the Case 2 teacher role by prohibiting task progression.

**Teacher:** OK, so which step are you and [Child 2] working on?

**Child 1:** Me and [Child 2] are working on the analysis because we haven't done that yet and [Name] is trying out . . .

**Teacher:** That's a title as well, with a capital A, and you need that title. What are you working on [Name]?

**Child 1:** On the letter. We're going to finish this step and then we're going to work on the letter to [Headteacher].

**Teacher:** OK. Brilliant. Who are you writing this to. . . is it to increase the budget? So remember to say that you want some money from them . . . very good, I like the letter. Are you offering them a say in the profit? **(Teacher leaves the group)** [ . . . ]

**Child 1:** What are you doing? I hate this one. [Child 2] can you get up our letter and I'll finish it off because I know what we need to write.

**Child 2:** Let's check it at quarter past.

**Child 1:** We shall start . . . Actually no, because we haven't got all of our stuff written down.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation.

Phase 3 lesson observation analysis identified differing learning microsystems to those of Phase 2. During group activities, there was limited evidence of hierarchical roles that progressed learning opportunities. Post-transition children had adopted 'novice' roles

that continually required support from their teachers. Conclusions from both the drama and mathematics lessons in Phase 3 identified children reverting into unconfident learners. As in Phase 2, the children immersed themselves in learning activities created by the teacher. However, passive roles prevented successful task completion and did not secure sound learning relationships. Learning was situated in a complex structure, where learning characteristics were not identified. As discussed in the previous section, similarities emerged between Phase 3 independent learning activities and lessons. To progress the task, children made individual suggestions without discussing or evaluating their impact. The difference with phase 2 was that there was little evidence of children refocusing ideas, for example, the dialogue sequence developed characters within the improvisation however, there was a lack of depth and clarity about their characteristics and contribution to the storyline. Throughout the sequence, no child emerged as 'expert' in order to provide strategies for others in the group to move from 'novice' to 'expert'.

**(Children rehearsing a short improvisation)**

**Child 1:** Why don't we . . . it's like freaking out.

**Child 2:** I know we could do that and then ooh, its dark in here. I'm just going down to get a torch.

**(Imitates walking down a staircase; the rest of the group giggle)**

**Child 3: (Imitates ghost sound and then giggles)**

**Child 1: (Screams and gets stuck behind the curtain in the Drama studio)**

**Child 2:** You've got it. You've got it. I want to be a star!

**(Children run out from behind the curtain and Child 3 falls over. The children laugh)**

**Child 1:** She's so funny.

**Child 3:** I'm not doing that.

**Child 4:** I'm scared of the dark.

**Child 2:** Turn around, touch the ground, bagsy not being in charge.

**Child 4:** Turn around touch the ground, bagsy . . .

**Child 2:** She's so funny.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson observation

The teacher influenced group work by providing a hierarchy to question and challenge children's concepts. Adopting the role of 'expert' contributed effectively to the structure of the microsystem. The teacher refocused the 'novice' perception of the activity. Ensuring that children identified their characters within a developed storyline provoked subtle changes within the hierarchical microsystem. First, children began to progress from 'novice' to 'expert' after the teacher's contribution. Second, the teacher provided effective tools to evaluate and sustain learning by providing a coherent structure. Finally, once the teacher left the group, the children constructed a successful improvisation.

**Teacher:** Right, what's the story then?

**Child 2:** Right, she goes up to the loft.

**Teacher:** Right, right, slow down. **(The group move into position with two children going to hide behind the curtain)** You don't go behind the curtain. Go off stage over there.

**Child 3: (Pretends to climb up the stairs and open the loft door)** Oh no a bat!

**Child 4: (Appears in front of her and tries to fly out of the window)** Oh no, you're going to die.

**Teacher:** Who are you talking to?

**Child 3:** The old lady.

**Teacher:** But she doesn't look like an old lady. How are you going to . . .

**Child 1:** I know. She could walk like that. **(Walks hunched up with a pretend walking stick)**

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson observation

By placing the child into the immediate situation of learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), it is evident that children need to develop specific roles to engage in and progress learning activities. The analysis highlighted microsystems adopting a hierarchical model that placed learning roles and relationships within learning situations. For successful learning, the initial 'expert' remained consistent throughout the activity. The 'expert' worked within the social behaviour code developed by Foreman and Cazden (1985). By implementing this structure each 'novice' transformed into 'expert'. However, the 'expert' formed the constant and role reversal would hinder tasks set. There was a distinct difference between the analyses of Phases 2 and 3. Post-transfer data suggested that children struggled to form 'expert' identities within the microsystem and relied on their teachers to provide the role. This suggests that during the transfer period there is a distinct setback in children's capabilities as independent learners.

#### **6.3.4 Summary of Question 2**

Transition provides a framework for children to develop knowledge and understanding from one institution into another. From an early age, children are conditioned to operate in formal learning contexts. This study recognises that for learning to be effective, successful partnerships with teachers and peers need focus and development. Initial concepts considered children moving from a singular learning structure into the multiple learning structures that secondary school offers. However, within each case study, pre-transfer children operated in discrete classroom cultures developed by their teachers. Post-transfer children contributed to a variety of learning cultures developed by multiple teachers. As a result, children are required to learn new regimes associated within different, and potentially challenging, classroom environments. The analysis contributed to an understanding of expectations within collective learning environments, the mesosystem, and their influence on the roles and relationships formed within the immediate learning situation, the microsystem.

Classrooms provide experiences for children to immerse themselves in knowledge and provide tools to help them learn independently. This study highlights the need for consistency of provision in effective learning transfer. Consistent provision includes

classroom routines, commonalities within curriculum and shared expectations of teacher-pupil relationships. To summarise, sustainable learning operates within familiar socio-cultural contexts in which children understand procedures, feel safe and can participate confidently. The study confirmed that children do have the ability to scaffold, assess, evaluate and structure learning independently. However, the paradox of post-transfer is that these skills can potentially dissolve and affect continuous learning.

The study highlighted three potential barriers as possible causes.

- The first considered the impact of SATs. Preparation for the tests caused a disjointed provision within the transfer period. Children's learning was disrupted by learning tools required to access the tests. In addition, the study considered hidden pressures SATs put on participants. As a result, post-test activities inhibited effective learning and encouraged 'down time'.
- The second highlighted the importance of teacher-pupil relationships within the mesosystems of learning. Similarities between teacher and pupil roles were considered in Table 6.1. However, for effective learning, the teacher acts as 'motivator' resulting in children being 'enthused'. Effective learning occurred when good work and behaviour were praised. In the study observed in the primary setting teachers praised individual children for working within required routines, however, post-transfer children were sanctioned collectively, thus removing individualisation.
- Finally, the analysis deepened learning relationships by situating teachers and pupils within learning microsystems. Effective learning microsystems operate between 'expert' and 'novice'. The 'expert' scaffolds learning to transform the asymmetric relationship with the 'novice' into an 'expert-to-expert' relationship. However, ineffective learning occurred when the 'expert' reversed role, or when the microsystem operated within a 'novice-to-novice' relationship. Lessons observed pre-transfer evidenced children as 'experts', however, post-transfer observations revealed only 'novice-to-novice' relationships. To deepen understanding of roles within the microsystem it is necessary to consider language demands placed on children during the transfer period, and further explore contributions offered by the 'expert' and 'novice' learners.

#### **6.4 How does language demand affect a child at transition? Is there a common language between teachers and children at transfer to support transition?**

Wells (2003, p231) considers learning as 'an ability to send and receive messages that contain more and more complex and abstract information about non-present objects.' Therefore, if learning is an act of multiple simultaneous dialogic activities, the use of language controls, co-ordinates and assimilates knowledge (Wood, 1998). Conflict emerges between learning participants and their level of contribution in learning situations. For successful learning to develop, language needs to be situated within the context of each learning activity. Lave (2009) defines context as participants operating in differing social environments. Consequently, participants are required to adapt to each setting and understand the practice that governs the context before learning can develop. Lave (2009) argues that learning is, therefore, not only a change in knowledge, but also a change in participation that is culturally-dependent on the participants. This further develops the concept that a child is bilingual; using and selecting language used in the broader context of home and school (Muschamp and Bullock, 2007). However, it also suggests that a child draws on multifarious languages from the different interactions contained within the contexts of mesosystems and microsystems of their everyday life.

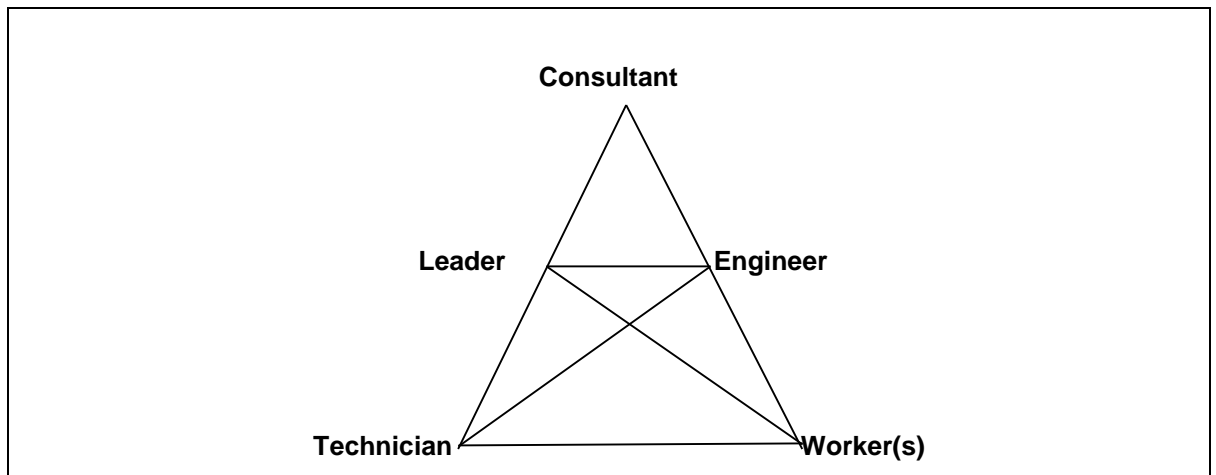
Research has significantly contributed to the understanding of the intricacies of how a child learns (Wood, 1998). However, furthering learning as retention of knowledge involves complexities of inter-relations between teacher and child, and child and peer. Fogel (1993) concludes that 'learning collaborations must evolve and grow, otherwise become stagnant and unfulfilling' (Azmitia, 2006 p211). This concept suggests that successful learning is a product of adaptation to continually changing contexts and their relationships. Potentially, different learning contexts will differ in routines, language structures and rules for successful engagement. Therefore, defining learning structures within different contexts requires understanding of how increased language demand has the potential to inhibit the development, interrogation and instillation of existing and new knowledge (Wood, 1998). Literature suggests that language and learning tools intertwine cultural, social and knowledge characteristics. Therefore, consideration of roles of participant language is critical in further understanding implications of language within mutually constructed mesosystems and microsystems of informal and formal learning activities. The study also considers how children develop social cues to interact with peers and teachers; the role of questioning as an indicator of learning progression; and differences in terminology used between teachers of Year 6 and Year 7.



#### **6.4.1 Language demand: a recognition of hierarchical language clusters**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines learning as occurring when a child can successfully carry out a task that others have set. Therefore, learning can occur in a variety of formal and informal settings in which there is more than one participant. Within these settings, dyadic relationships are formed between learners – whether ‘expert-to-expert’, or ‘expert’ to ‘novice’. As a result, three types of overarching microsystems may be formed: an observational dyad consists of one member paying sustained attention to another, which is acknowledged by the other; a joint activity dyad allows members to share a task evenly; while a primary dyad continues to exist even when members are not seen to be co-operating (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, one child may be working on a set task, whilst the other is daydreaming. Each microsystem was present in the open-ended task that the children completed. However, each developed a further layer of relationships defined by discrete language clusters. Therefore, the independent learning activity was situated within a set of microsystems that were controlled and exhibited by the participants, with each being influenced by verbal contributions made to complete the set task successfully.

Within each case, language clusters were identified with key characteristics displayed by participants. Data suggested that each group could be categorised into five unique and independent roles that appeared to be hierarchical in nature with a purpose to move the task forward. Hierarchy was defined by analysing the nature and purpose of contribution made by each participant. Figure 6.4 is representative of the structure. The roles have been categorised as ‘consultant’, ‘leader’, ‘engineer’, ‘technician’, and ‘worker’. Analysis concluded that each case had a very similar language profile within the categories. Table 6.3 details the language characteristics and children associated with each profile. Notably, these profiles were identical in Phases 2 and 3. Defined roles did not interchange as the task progressed as participants innately identified with their role without acknowledging it to the group. The children naturally adopted their language category without any predetermined discussion. In order to function efficiently each group developed a hierarchy whereby equilibrium of roles forged between the ‘consultant’, ‘leader’ and ‘engineer’. Despite each being able to function independently, they used each other to ensure effective task progression leading to a successful outcome.



**Figure 6.4:** Hierarchical structure of group communication

The '*consultant*' from each case developed a consistent and similar profile across all three cases. Each made a significant contribution labelled 'giving advice.' However, this was not about raft construction, but provided a wider contribution from previous knowledge, experience and language. Much of the advice presented within the wider context was met with either little or no response. Participants did not value this and viewed it as a hindrance to task progression. The example confirms this concept, as there was no lead in to the statement made about windows on a boat and no participants responded. Child 1 attempted to refine the actual design by requesting that the raft adopted the features of a boat, therefore producing a reality to the activity. Child 1 in Case 1 had the ability to visualise the result exceeding expectations of the task set. Yet the reality of the contribution proved to be unrealistic in the time and resources given.

**Child 1:** If you don't have a window in a boat, then you can't see, unless it's a canal boat. I don't know how you're supposed to see from a canal boat, because the sealant would make it difficult and the man doing the steering would not be able to see what was coming.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Further statements presented by the '*consultant*' provided information concerning submarines, boats and laws of physics to keep vessels afloat. Using a more versatile range of vocabulary, the '*consultant*' presented ideas using repetitive keywords and instructing through description.

Very early within the task, Child 7 from Case 3 adopted the role of '*consultant*' by organising and presenting work, generating learner interest, and through use of modelling

and explanation (Wood *et al*, 1976; Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999). Data not only highlighted Child 7's understanding of buoyancy, but also effective use of this term, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of how to keep a raft afloat. Using prior experience, developing terminology and instructive vocabulary, Child 7 developed a plan for the raft for other participants to follow. This is an example of *magistral* dialogue developing the first and second voice between *magistra* and novice (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999). Child 7 modelled expertise through diagrammatic and verbal instruction. By breaking down information, the task was carefully framed for the rest of the group, ensuring a successful outcome. Other participants clarified and checked their understanding of each concept by asking questions. Child 4 replicated this, visualising what the raft would look like by asking a mixture of open and closed questions about the diagrams presented by Child 7. In response, using terminology as 'I thought', 'we could', 'you have' and 'you can' allowed ideas to be developed and other participants to take ownership of the work in hand.

**Child 7:** It's a really good way, a really easy way to make a boat and you pretty much make it.

**Child 4:** What, like that? **(Points to the whiteboard and adds a further line)**

**Child 7:** It's pretty much like this. You have a square, a buoyancy board there and that goes over and you have another one there, and for more buoyancy you have one there which keeps it afloat. You can then have more going like that, and like that, and like that, because that's how [ . . . ]

**Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Over 50% of comments made were driven by advice. Each 'consultant' asked a high proportion of questions relating to wider contexts of the raft to ensure their design demands were being met, construction was on schedule, and made continuous targeted assessment of the raft. Intertwined with this were 'negative comments' associated with unrealistic demands and high expectations of construction. Child 4 detailed a collection of instructions given to participants in Case 2. Despite each instruction having a potential negative connotation, prior understanding detailing potential 'sinking' hazards supported them. By doing so, the 'consultant' continued in their role of 'expert', developing a hierarchy of dialogue with other participants. Giving advice about the permeability of water, the example steers production away from decoration to successful task progression, ensuring the raft floats. Careful scaffolding increased understanding within the hierarchical structure.

**Child 4:** Make sure you don't put all the fabric to the top because if a slight bit of water goes in there the whole thing will sink 'cos that cloth is a really good absorber [ . . . ] Come on we're just wasting our time. Don't do the designs yet. Just get to the actual point. Can we use some water to test drive it? [ . . . ] But water's so thin it can go through any size of holes. I reckon the other schools have triple padded it that's why it floats for a long while. I reckon water will go in it.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

	Characteristics	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>'Consultant'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider of advice throughout the task.</li> <li>• Using prior knowledge to support advice given to complete the task.</li> <li>• Broad knowledge to attempt discussion with the group.</li> <li>• Attempt to check the progress of the task against advice given.</li> </ul>	Child 1 (Phase 2) Child 6 (Phase 3)	Child 4	Child 7
<b>'Leader'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans final outcome and targets for successful completion.</li> <li>• Asks 'open' questions to ensure successful completion of task.</li> <li>• Delegates responsibilities to ensure successful task progression.</li> <li>• Has the potential to be negative when task is not proceeding as planned.</li> </ul>	Child 3	Child 2	Child 3
<b>'Engineer'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructs the task using advice from the 'consultant' and 'leader'.</li> <li>• Progresses with the task using finer detail to construct the raft methodically.</li> <li>• Tends to work alone, but with greater focus on task progression.</li> <li>• Higher levels of frustration associated with the task and its construction.</li> </ul>	Child 4	Child 1	Child 4
<b>'Technician'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more reliable member of the group.</li> <li>• Resource manager providing support for all group members.</li> <li>• Tends to agree with the group and happy to provide resources when requested.</li> <li>• Will ask questions for clarification.</li> </ul>	Child 5	Child 3	Child 6
<b>'Worker'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carries out each task under guidance from all above.</li> <li>• Needs support from others to function successfully within the group.</li> </ul>	Child 2	Children 5, 6, 7	

**Table 6.3:** Characteristics of language clusters within the independent learning activity

The '*leader*' and '*engineer*' of each group also had a consistent profile detailing statements made to ensure task progression by giving instruction, asking questions and preventing frustration between participants. Each role was task-driven by asking challenging questions to move the task forward. 'Leaders' sought resolution within the group by giving constructive advice and clarifying everyone's idea. In fact, they modelled advice given from the 'consultant' to ensure successful completion of the task set. Data suggested that the 'leader' had the ability to differentiate information given by the 'consultant' and translate it into task-specific vocabulary. Each 'leader' made a balance of positive and negative comments relating to the task, rather than wider aspects of construction ideology. As with the 'leader', the 'engineer' made significant contributions to moving the task forward by modelling advice from the 'consultant' and 'leader'. In essence, the 'engineer' was the facilitator of the group. However, unlike the 'leader' they worked on finer details of construction, for example, the length of the deck and position of the hull. They asked significant questions concerning practicalities of construction and design of the raft. There was no evidence of frustration when participants did not follow instructions or finer detail was unsuccessful. The 'leader' and 'engineer' developed an effective working partnership by sharing information and discussing ideas before executing them.

**Child 3:** Which one did we decide again?

**Child 4:** This one.

**Child 3:** I think it was.

**Child 4:** No this will do. It was the biggest one because it's flat and floats better.

**Child 3:** Yeah. That's for the bottom and this is for the top.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Data highlighted similarities between the '*engineer*' and '*consultant*' in giving instructions. To sustain ownership of the task, Child 3 initially uses the phrase 'shall we . . .'. Child 2 then reinforced this. However, by creating pace the '*leader*' deviated from a collaborative instruction to direct instruction by changing 'we' to 'you'. With this example, the microsystem encapsulates static language usage between the '*consultant*' and '*engineer*', but the '*leader*' adapts their language according to the situation. The adaptation creates different responses within the group and has the potential to dismiss further suggestions by participants, thus enforcing asymmetry of relationships. Direct instruction increased frustration in the completion of the task, with the '*leader*' working within an individual system. After spending time deliberating with hypothesis and theory to ensure the raft floats, the '*leader*' made a decision with which the other participants automatically agree.

**Child 3:** Shall we have this for the first bit? (**Holding straws and pipe cleaners**)

**Child 1:** We can use the smaller straws as well.

**Child 2:** Shall we put this piece through there? (**Putting a pipe cleaner inside the straw**) So we put this one there. Yes? How many shall we have? (**Marking the straws to be cut making sure they are the same length**)

**Child 3:** No. You need to put them all the way through there. Don't put them all there, try this one there.

**Child 2:** Yeah, yeah.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

'Technicians' from each case made more statements concerning resources and developed systems for managing materials. They asked mostly task-related questions, ensuring resources were appropriate for the raft. Despite profiles being less consistent than other roles, each made a significant proportion of resource-related statements. The role involved distribution of resources when asked, including the cutting of sellotape and measuring items. The role was instinctive, with the 'technician' collaborating mainly with the 'leader' or 'engineer'. At the start of the example, Child 3 organised sellotape, and by the end of the extract, the child picked up beads dropped by another participant. This contribution was taken for granted by the group. As a result, Child 3 contributed to various microsystems within the group. Therefore, the 'technician' had the ability to move in out and out of microsystems by providing continuous resource support. Across all cases, data suggested that the 'technician' developed a variety of partnerships throughout the task. Despite having a lower place on the hierarchical system, their role was more complex than others. The classification does not relate to leadership or design qualities, but is essential in ensuring the task can process in a timely and ordered fashion.

**Child 2:** Look at my little boat. (**Holds up a prototype made with yoghurt pot and material**)

**Child 3:** There's two rolls of sellotape here.

**Child 2:** (**Drops the prototype on the table**)

**Child 1:** You almost broke this.

**Child 4:** No

**Child 3:** It's OK.

**Child 4:** (**Knocks the bead pot off the table**) Oh my Lord, all the beads fell down.

**Child 2:** I'm OK, what are you doing?

**Child 3:** Picking these up. (**Picking up beads from the floor**)

**Child 4:** OK. What's going to be our basic design?

**Case 2:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Remaining members of the group are classified as 'workers'. These participants contributed diligently to each role without significantly adopting one. 'Workers' supported both construction and design work, and offered limited ideas to the task. Within Case 2,

Children 5, 6 and 7 were identified as 'workers'. The group naturally divided between leadership and 'workers', with the 'technician' supporting each. Frustrations with the task increased when 'workers' attempted to make decisions on design and construction. Their ideas did not contribute to the final design. The language used was less decisive using 'you' or 'I' instead of 'we'. The leadership hierarchy did not have more dominant personalities, but characteristics and prior understanding that helped to organise and present information efficiently. With this divide, 'workers' tended to be associated with a blame culture of not being 'allowed' to contribute, rather than actively seeking membership within the group. 'Workers' created their own 'closed' microsystems in which membership was like-with-like, rather than forging distinctive partnerships that allowed discussion, hypothesising and support. Data showed that 'workers' were seeking membership, but did not have sufficient learning tools or vocabulary to take turns. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's analogy (1979) of observational analysis forms distinct consistent microsystems within each case. Observational dyads are represented in the relationships between the 'consultant', 'leader' and 'engineer' who are able to sustain and initiate ideas with each other. With the introduction of the 'technician', further microsystems are developed – classified as joint activity dyads, where roles and responsibilities are shared. 'Workers' can infiltrate these systems, but never develop consistent membership, thus developing primary dyads associated with the task.

**Child 4:** Look you put paper on the side of that.

**Child 5:** Oh [Child 6].

**Child 6:** I didn't do it.

**Child 1:** Stop messing around.

**Child 2:** Yeah, you shouldn't mess around.

**Child 6:** But you said you'd let us do the decorating and you're not. You've just took it off us and did it.

**Child 1:** 'Cos you were just messing about and we need to get it done.

**Child 5:** You've taken it over there and we haven't done anything yet.

**Child 1:** We were thinking.

**Child 5:** Cos what we've done you've taken off.

**Child 6:** Oh, let's just get on with it.

**Child 7:** You gave it us to do, and you've just taken it back and took it all off.

**Child 4:** We'll let you decorate it after we've sorted it out.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

Appendix 3 documents individual contributions to each role within the group. Despite evidence cited for hierarchy of roles in terms of quality and definition of statements, contributions to the task remained equal between 'consultant', 'leader' and 'engineer'. Statements counted showed a significant equilibrium between the three roles, with

approximately 80% of exchanges contained within the microsystem of 'consultant-leader-engineer'.

Despite the task resulting in more frustration and off-task talk, Phase 3 independent learning activity identified identical language roles. The dyad and triad relationships between 'consultant', 'leader' and 'engineer' navigated the structural design across all cases. For example, Case 1 initiated ideas for strengthening the tower. Child 4, the 'engineer', developed the finer detail of placing pieces of spaghetti in line to secure a firm foundation. However, Child 6, the 'consultant', contributed rationale for the structure by modelling how the spaghetti should be stuck, and then considered that a cross-frame would be stronger than a 'zigzag.' Child 3, the 'leader', contemplated the evidence given and instructed the group to proceed with the task given.

**Child 5:** What're you doing?

**Child 4:** We're trying to stick all these [pieces of spaghetti] along here, that's why we're using lots of short ones.

**Child 6:** Hang on, hang on you need to do this. **(Sticks the spaghetti onto the Blu-tac)**

**Child 5:** Well done! **(Claps)**

**Child 4:** I'm just a genius.

**Child 6:** It needs to be stronger.

**Child 4:** That's what I said. We need to do a zigzag then a floor and another zigzag.

**Child 6:** I thought a cross.

**Child 3:** If we did, and a cross like that and then a floor like that.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity.

This example is comparable to Case 2. Child 2, the 'leader', and Child 4, the 'consultant', reflect on the shape of the first floor structure. However, the discussion preceding this concerns the use of Blu-tac or sellotape to secure the structure. This concludes with Child 2 instructing Child 3 to use Blu-tac and 'put the sellotape down'. Child 4 furthers the discussion stating that the strength of Blu-tac compares to that of magnets, therefore securing a rigid structure. However, conflict emerges with the shape of the floor being either square or rectangular. Child 2 confirms Child 4's hypothesis, only for to Child 4 to reconsider the shape as a square. The conclusion is that Child 4 identifies that the floor needs to be square, and Child 2 leads the group, ensuring a square is made.

**Child 2:** Put the sellotape down we're not using sellotape [ . . . ]

**Child 4:** I know. I know it's really hard to pull apart, it's just like magnets. We need to move this bit apart because look. It looks more like a rectangle.

**Child 2:** Yeah, that's what it is. That's right.

**Child 4:** No it's not.

**Child 2:** Yes it is.

**Child 4:** No, it's a square base.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 independent learning activity



The 'technician' and 'workers' of Cases 1 and 2 continued to carry out tasks requested without questioning reasons behind them. The 'technician' continually negotiated access between each interaction ensuring that at every stage of construction, groups were adequately resourced.

Case 3 only had two participants in Phase 3, the 'consultant' and 'engineer'. Despite this, two distinct relationships were formed, the most prominent being the dyad between Children 7 and 4. Their Phase 2 language role did not change. However, development of the task was hindered, as the children had to work with their own suggestions and had nobody to instruct them, or to whom to delegate tasks. However, data suggested that Child 4 worked across roles and adopted characteristics of 'leader' and 'technician'. The second relationship was 'mono-lingual' with the 'consultant' evaluating and contributing existing knowledge without dialogue exchange with Child 4.

**Child 7:** Let me think. **(Places two pieces of pasta into the Blu-tac and joins it together at the top by carefully wrapping a thin piece of Blu-tac at the top)** Yeah. **(Secures pasta in the middle using sellotape)** Yeah. **(Observes Child 4 and realises that the cross piece is too small)** Move this [spaghetti upright] closer.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Analysis further highlighted the need for hierarchical roles within effective interactive learning microsystems. The analysis of language clusters deepened the understanding of 'expert' and 'novice' relationships by suggesting that children instinctively worked within discrete language clusters. Each had a significant impact on the tasks set and contributed to structuring the process and outcomes of independent learning activities. Evidence cited acknowledged that between peers there was a consistency in language roles during the transition period. However, analysis also concluded that there was little development of each role. The children actively interacted between clusters that were not initially determined by hierarchical attainment. Each was influenced by the application of prior knowledge and language acquisition to challenge concepts confidently. The analysis does not suggest that for effective learning contexts all group work should contain all these clusters at any given point. It does suggest that to maximise learning opportunities, teachers need to identify and understand how children work within discrete mesosystems. This will ensure that children do not continually participate as 'workers' and 'technicians', but have the opportunity to develop knowledge by adopting roles as 'consultant', 'leader'

and 'engineer'. Thus, developing confidence of learning ensures greater understanding of transferring learning across all contexts.

#### **6.4.2 Learning of social cues within microsystems**

Azmitia (2006) concludes that collaborative tools of learning involve all tools that allow social engagement, interaction and shared understanding. However, linking these categorisations is the notion of social cues that enable participants' active involvement in, contribution to, and empathy with others in socially-constructed contexts. Wells (2003) suggests that language mediates relationships with objects and people. However, dialogue is dependent on participants having some shared understanding of 'how to make interaction happen' (Mercer and Littleton, 2007). Yet interaction not only constitutes the start of a conversation, it needs to be 'moved along' and 'repaired when confusions, misunderstandings or conflicts ensue' (Azmitia, 2006). As a result, Azmitia suggests cues that participants develop in dialogue. These include participants monitoring movements of others, interacting, assisting and acknowledging the need to back-off when a partner has the matter under control. This framework contributed significantly to the understanding of social cues within the lessons observed and the independent learning activity. Participant understanding of each cue allowed successful progression and understanding of tasks set.

Analysis suggested that children situated in classroom and independent learning activities had difficulties responding to and monitoring movement of others. However, teachers responded to the minutiae of verbal, non-verbal, body and facial language associated with tasks set. Three main categories of responses emerged. The first reacted to children's apparent misunderstanding of instruction. Across all three cases, in whole-class situations some children did not respond to instruction when it was not understood, or if singled out from the rest of the class. Observations detailed children either shuffling in their seats, or making intermittent eye contact with the teacher. For example, in the following sequence of dialogue the child has stood out from the class on three distinct occasions. After arriving late, the child sat, hidden, at the side of the class. Throughout the initial introduction to the task, the child attempted to make eye contact with the teacher. However, the child's head continually moved away from the teacher by looking down. Finally, the teacher questioned whether the child had completed initial tasks from previous lessons. The dialogue did not accuse, but gave the child opportunities to move out of potential confrontation by self-acknowledgement that work was incomplete. The teacher

not only read the situation, but also responded to the child's movements by moving the child out of the situation. As a result, the interaction ceased and the lesson progressed.

**(Child 1 arrives late to the lesson. Sits on the carpet to the side of the class and makes intermittent eye contact with the teacher)**

**Teacher:** Right . . . you children who haven't started . . . so can you sit on that table and work with Miss so I can talk with the others. [Child 1] did you start your work yesterday?

**Child 1:** I think so.

**Teacher:** Did you start writing your story and we wrote those first three paragraphs? We all wrote those paragraphs in writing yesterday; did you start to do it? Do you want to go and get your book and check for me? In my head I don't remember seeing you do that.

**Child 1:** I'm sure I did.

**Teacher:** But in my head I cannot remember you doing that. Can you just go and check for me?

**(Child 1 moves to the back of the classroom head slightly down to get the exercise book)**

**Child 2:** Miss, [Child 1] wasn't here yesterday.

**Teacher:** Yes, I know that, I've just asked her to go and check for me.

**Case 2:** Phase 2 lesson observation

The second category of response identified children's reaction when unsure how to progress with the task set. It is suggested that talk provides a mechanism that enables, interprets and evaluates joint activity (Wells, 2003). However, if children do not instinctively respond to the mechanism, unspoken dialogue can hinder progression. The example cited highlights teacher intervention when two children do not interact to problem-solve. The teacher responds to a dyad who are independently looking down at their work. The initial question, 'Are you OK?', activated dialogue and allowed the teacher to participate within the group ensuring that they were equipped to move forward. Allowing the children to vocalise the issue empowered them to resolve the problem. The teacher's language role interpreted the issue by questioning reasons for the choice of supermarket. In response, the children evaluated their choice by reaffirming that the particular supermarket offered value. At the end of the exchange the issue was resolved by using parents to visit the supermarket and share their products with another group to minimise cost.

**(Children are looking at their costing sheet. There is no dialogue)**

**Teacher:** Are you OK?

**Child 1:** A bit lost.

**Child 2:** We're trying to work out where to get that from as we only have 88p. We're not sure if we are to put that there. **(Pointing to piece of paper on desk)**

**Child 1:** We're gonna go to [supermarket].

**Teacher:** Who's going to go to [supermarket] though?

**Child 1:** You get value there.

**Teacher:** I don't go shopping in [supermarket] so I can't offer to do that for you. I don't have a [supermarket] near me. **(Looks to another table)** Are you OK? **(Turns attention back to child 1 and 2 [ . . . ]** OK. You might like to ask if anybody else is going to [supermarket].

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

The final category considered the child's response to their teacher's actions and movements. Analysis identified that if a teacher smiled, the child reciprocated the smile. Alternatively, if the teacher signalled for silence, or for the activity to stop, the children reacted almost instantly. When verbal exchanges involved classroom routines, the children's reactions took longer. The independent learning activity offered no data that correlate with this analysis. Therefore, it is suggested that children have the ability to react to and monitor subtle movement, but have difficulty in transferring this into peer-led environments.

**(Teacher supports child who was absent by distributing yesterday's test and sticking the questions in the child's exercise book. The class write 'Learning objectives (LO)' in silence)**

**Teacher:** There you go, you can get on now, but write down the LOs first. Those ones on the board, that's what we're going to be doing today, but everybody else will be reviewing their test. **(Looks at another child)** [Name] quiet. **(Puts finger to his lips and child stops talking)**

**Case 2:** Phase 3 mathematics lesson

The study identified distinct changes in the quality of language behaviours and interactions between Phase 2 and Phase 3 lesson observation and independent learning activity. Analysis suggested two related conclusions. The first identified changes in peer pressure that developed conflict in learning situations. However, peer pressure did not relate to Epstein's (1983; Demetriou *et al*, 2000) contribution that defined it as participants developing strategies to avoid pressures. For example, participants suggesting that they were on report in order to work harder in class. The study highlighted peer pressure as a distinct change in learning roles, in which language was used to prevent continuation of tasks set. Unlike Phase 2 where interactions were primarily associated with the task, Phase 3 offered more off-task talk amongst peers. As a result, lack of task-related dialogue developed into participants failing to read positive social cues and engaging in low-level disruption. For example, Case 2's drama lesson offered cohesive whole-class tasks that were led by the teacher. The teacher scaffolded language, giving concise definitions of keywords and verbal prompts. However, once the children moved into independent group activity, the quality of work deteriorated for the majority of the class. Children associated the freedom of developing learning with the freedom to engage in social, unrelated dialogue. If dialogue was aimed at an individual, the child would then contribute negatively to the group, questioning the role and purpose of the task. For example, Child 2 changed the focus of the conversation away from personal details to a collective statement for the whole group stating, 'I do not know why we're doing this.' In addition, throughout off-task sequences children offered occasional suggestions to move the task forward.

**Child 3:** What are you doing?  
**Child 2:** Look, I'm a bit dirty.  
**Child 3:** Why are you dirty?  
**Child 2:** I do wash, I do.  
**Child 1:** [Child 2] doesn't wash his socks.  
**Child 2:** Yes I do.  
**Child 3:** He's got smelly socks on.  
**Child 1:** I know what we can use – an AK47 like what they use on Black Ops.  
**(Imitates bullet sound)**  
**Child 2:** I don't know why we're doing this.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson observation

The quality of interaction between Phases 2 and 3 differed in the quality of work presented in the independent learning activity. During Phase 2, Cases 1 and 3 worked collectively as a group. Case 2 operated in two discrete systems that differentiated between children moving the task forward, and those who wanted to contribute, but did not necessarily have the confidence to interact with others. Phase 3 produced contrasting results. Despite language cluster roles remaining consistent, the quality of interactive dialogue diminished. For example, Case 1 established cohesive working relationships. However, half-way through the activity relationship clusters dissolved, with children working either independently, or in dyadic partnerships. This was not because of the nature of the task, but the amount of off-task talk offered. The talking was not about personal feelings towards others, but an opportunity to 'catch up' with stories generated from their new school environment. As the task progressed, stories became more elaborate and began to question reality from myth.

**Child 4:** Oh you know a boy in my tutor [group] he ate a chilli pepper. A really hot chilli pepper in front of the class. He had to go to First Aid because it was really burning his lips and the poor boy got it in his eyes and he had to have eye drops and everything. I've never had to go to First Aid.  
**Child 6:** This boy in my tutor [group] stole my locker key lock so I couldn't get my locker open. I had the key, but he had the lock so he locked it on the gate and nobody could get out.

**Case 1:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

The third attribute concerns 'assistance' (Azmitia, 2006). Demetriou *et al* (2000) suggest that positive and work-orientated interactions strengthen achievement. This is largely due to the offering of assistance. Analysis suggested that when working in discrete groups two categories of assistance emerged. The first acknowledged peer-support with children offering advice and correction for successful task completion by others, as already discussed. The second observed peers supporting language pronunciation and definition. This was more evident in Phase 2 than Phase 3. Despite lesson observations concluding

that the teacher offered continual language support throughout all tasks, the independent learning activity suggested that children also had the ability to develop language assistance. This was structured similarly to dyadic exchanges involving their teacher. Children would automatically correct or improve incorrect pronunciation. The recipient did not feel belittled by the assistance, but rehearsed using the corrective word, or words of similar phonic. For example, 'Activia' and 'activate.'

**Child 2:** Shall we take this bit off? **(Pointing to the yogurt pot label)**

**Child 1:** Yes.

**Child 4:** You should take that bit off at the same time.

**Child 1:** Yeah, but now we can't sponsor Act . . . iv . . .

**Child 4:** Activia.

**Child 5:** You said Act . . . ivia

**Child 1:** I don't know. I said 'activate'.

**Case 2:** Phase 1 independent learning activity

In addition to language pronunciation, across all cases children managed to define and apply terms. These were contained within a dialogue sequence that clarified the new term, then orally defined it and placed it in context. This conversation sequence below identifies the process of defining the acquisition and meaning of 'mast'.

		<b>(Children deciding what to place on top of the raft)</b>
<b>QUERY</b>	<b>Child 3:</b>	We need to do that with a top bit then.
		<b>(Considering the paddle made from a wooden stick)</b>
	<b>Child 4:</b>	That's what we're doing.
<b>QUERY</b>	<b>Child 6:</b>	I could make like um . . . put that on the top of it . . .
		<b>(wooden stick and fabric)</b>
<b>CLARIFICATION</b>	<b>Child 7:</b>	What like a mast?
	<b>Child 6:</b>	Yeah.
<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>Child 7:</b>	So if the wind catches it would move, so you'll have to make like
<b>CONTEXT</b>		a triangle wouldn't you?
	<b>Child 6:</b>	Yeah.

**Case 3:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

The final category identifies situations whereby participants have the understanding to back away when their partner has matters under control (Azmitia, 2006). This category highlighted inconsistencies within and across phases. Lesson observations concluded that teacher routines consistently moved between classroom groups, ensuring issues were resolved. Once resolved, the teacher would move onto the next group. Children in each Phase 2 group activity sought to resolve misunderstanding and supported peers through

their work. At times, children used strategies employed by their teacher to ensure other's understanding followed by working on their own task.

**Child 1:** OK. So we need to . . . this shows how much . . . write it just here. **(Shows Child 2 where to write the sentence on the paper)** This shows that most children think that this one's really good.

**Child 2:** That most people.

**Child 1:** Yes, that's right. **(Continues with own task)**

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

However, more often children adopted the strategy of engaging with work issues, then observing their group to ensure instructions and definitions were understood. This was significant within the independent learning activity and, in particular, the role of 'consultant'. The example highlights Child 1 monitoring the progress of work. The child moved between two established dyads to check on progress. This was preceded by Child 1 removing others' work to check independently whether instructions had been followed sufficiently. Despite the other children working diligently and with understanding, at no time did Child 1 'back-off'.

**Child 1:** Why are you putting those [beads] onto the sail?

**Child 5:** To make it more fancy.

**Child 1: (Walks between Child 5 and Child 2 working together, and Child 3 and Child 4 working together, checking on progress)**

**Child 2:** There we go that's the sail. [ . . . ] The only problem is with these on the sail [is] it will weigh the sail down.

**Child 1:** Shall we test? **(Reaches over to Child 3 and Child 4 and places the yogurt pot on top of the deck)** You need about three more straws on each side.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 independent learning activity

The analysis suggested that children also had the ability to resolve learning conflict by stepping into situations when peers became frustrated with the set task. Findings were consistent across all cases. Resolution was sought by offering advice to solve issues, re-directing dialogue, or adding humour to the situation. Once resolved, the children instantly moved on with the task.

**Child 2:** [Child 3] be careful [ . . . ] You snapped it [ . . . ] Can we snap them so we don't have to make it as tall? If it's small then it won't fall, because as you make it taller and taller it will become more and more unstable.

**Child 3:** I can snap them really easy. **(Karate chops the table)**

**Child 2:** Best not to do that.

**Child 3:** I will snap them . . . all the ones we use I will snap in half

**Child 2: (Measures a piece of spaghetti)** For it to be in half perfectly we need to break it there.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 independent learning activity

Using Azmitia's categories (2006) to understand the development of collaborative learning language, the analysis suggested that throughout the transfer period children had the ability to read and react to social cues. During Phase 2 there was imitation of behaviours demonstrated by their teachers and peers. In formal and informal learning observations, children consistently reacted to and moved on from situations by resolution through explanation, further inquiry or humour. However, Phase 3 offered limited evidence of this. Children continued to embed their learning through interaction between a variety of microsystems, and issues of peer-pressure situated in learning disguised reaction to social cues. Evidence concluded that within post-transfer learning, hierarchical structures remained. There was no regression of children's understanding of dialogue structures, but for some there was regression in developing learning behaviours. As a result, for some, learning progression seemed stilted as children reacted to language, rather than acted within language.

#### **6.4.3 Questioning as an indicator of what is happening. What is going to be stressful for the child?**

Galton *et al* (1999b) and Evans *et al* (2010) identify rare opportunities for children to respond to open, speculative and challenging questions to which they are required to give more than one answer in the primary classroom. Research suggests that up to 80% of teachers' time is spent on asking, answering or reacting to questions (Tholander, 2011). Tholander further argues that this is partly due to the 'assessment era' in which schools operate. However, decreasing teacher-led questions should increase child dialogue; but such an equation is too simplistic to ensure continuity of learning throughout the transition period (Wood, 1992; Mercer and Littleton, 2007). If, within classrooms, teachers are assessors, then questions are used to quantify oral understanding of knowledge and application of knowledge to relevant curriculum areas. The lessons observed indicated use of questions to clarify and enforce, and to prompt learning discussions.

Initial question analysis highlighted a distinct pattern of open and closed questions. The Case 1 teacher identified that the observed lesson was structured as a perceived secondary-style lesson. Therefore, the difference between open and closed questions was comparable to that of Phase 3. However, between Phases 2 and 3 of Cases 2 and 3, there was a substantial increase in closed questions, with children required to give one or two word utterances in Phase 3. Figure 6.5 documents the initial findings. Analysis suggests



that within each case's primary learning structures, the higher number of questions the teacher asked, the more oral contributions the child made. Post-transfer the child's dialogue was restricted by the recurrence of closed questioning techniques. However, such an analogy is too simplistic to draw a convincing conclusion. In order to understand the impact that types of questioning have on a child's learning, Mercer and Littleton (2007) suggest considering the form and function of questions. In this analysis, the form constituted the type and style of questioning, and the function was the purpose and contribution to learning objectives set.

Open question exchanges replicate the analogy of Socratic dialogue that allows participants to enquire and develop knowledge mutually (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999). The form of these questions constructs sequences of questions and answers that gradually broaden and deepen understanding. The form of the question cycle builds on a series of initial teacher-led pre-determined questions. Once responses develop, the dialogue instructs questions that are controlled by responses, rather than questions. As a result, the structure depicts a triangle the base of which broadens as the exchange develops. For example, the following question sequence is from Case 3 lesson observation activity. The teacher constructed the initial question. The use of 'have you' invited the child to participate within the developing sequence.

**Teacher:** Have you decided on your photographs for your PowerPoint?

**Child:** I want this one because it looks really good.

The following question 'can you' established the level of understanding the child had associated with the task. The response offered minimal understanding of key vocabulary associated with the visual art analysis. However, the child observed the basic shape of a piece of wood.

**Teacher:** So can you tell me a little bit about these images?

**Child:** It's a bit of wood up close.

The teacher accredited the child's response, but directed the child to begin to focus on the abstract. Questions used support the development of recognising a piece of wood, to that of an image of a sword.

**Teacher:** OK, it's a bit of wood up close, but what about this cross? Can you tell me what happened?

**Child:** It's like a sword.

Questions asked consider terminology of darker and lighter colours. The teacher moved beyond pre-determined questions about what the child was doing to questions triggered by

the child's response. As a result, the teacher deepened knowledge by selecting key words to describe shades of colour associated with the image. This no longer concerns the basic shapes the child can depict, but ensures understanding of recognising the finer details, or abstract.

**Teacher:** OK. What about this dome here? Can you tell me about the darker colours? How does it work?

**Child:** The white background makes the darker colours stand out.

The teacher ended the cycle by engaging in mutual understanding of the picture. The child's knowledge, scaffolded by question-driven dialogue, moved the child from novitiate to 'expert'.

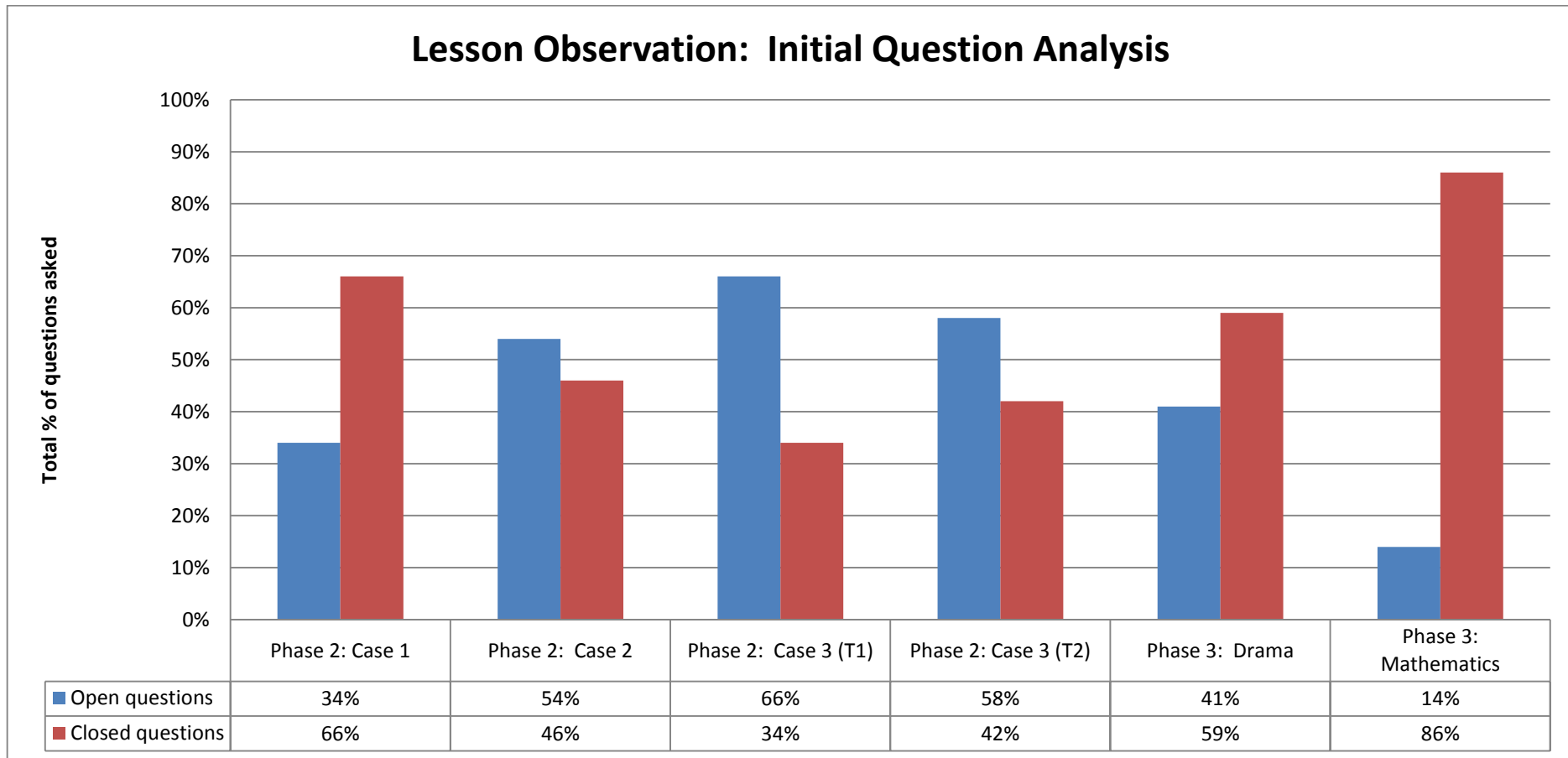
**Teacher:** So it makes all of this stand out?

**Child:** The cross looks really good here.

**Teacher:** That's right. The image makes everything fit and you have to decide how it all fits.

### **Case 3:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Different questioning strategies were observed between Phases 2 and 3. The concept of a triangle was inverted in Phase 3, with teachers beginning question cycles using broad statements (Figure 6.6). Initial exchanges offered features of Socratic dialogue. However, as the children had difficulty accessing relevant information, the dialogue transformed into *magistral* exchanges emphasising the teacher as 'expert'. These roles did not change throughout both lesson observations. For example, at the start of the exchange the teacher asked a broad question for the class to analyse key points of a story. A mixed response developed with children not giving the teacher's pre-determined answer. As a result, the questions became narrower in focus, detailing only the structure and main characters of the story. Towards the end of the sequence, the teacher navigated responses by prompting key points. At the end, the teacher asked for a yes/no clarification as to 'who killed the Granny'. The teacher provided the answer to the class.



**Figure 6.5:** Lesson observation: initial question analysis ('open' versus 'closed' questions)

**(Evaluating the key points of a story the class created)**

**Teacher:** What are the key points of the story . . . if I was to say, 'What are the key points of the story?' What was the key point to the beginning bit of the story? Hang on, what was the key points?

**Child 1:** The Granny.

**Teacher:** The Granny. What about the Granny? What did we find out at the beginning, that if we took it out [of] the story the story wouldn't happen.

**Child 2:** That she was like very poor and she didn't have a house.

**Teacher:** That was in the middle though wasn't it? That was in the middle. If we took that out could the story still happen the fact she was a tramp? Yeah, it could still happen. So we're thinking of one bit right at the beginning.

[ . . . ] **(Series of short question and answer responses)**

**Teacher:** It was the monkey [who killed the Granny] wasn't it? No it was the rats, it was the rats wasn't it? The rats killed her.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 drama lesson

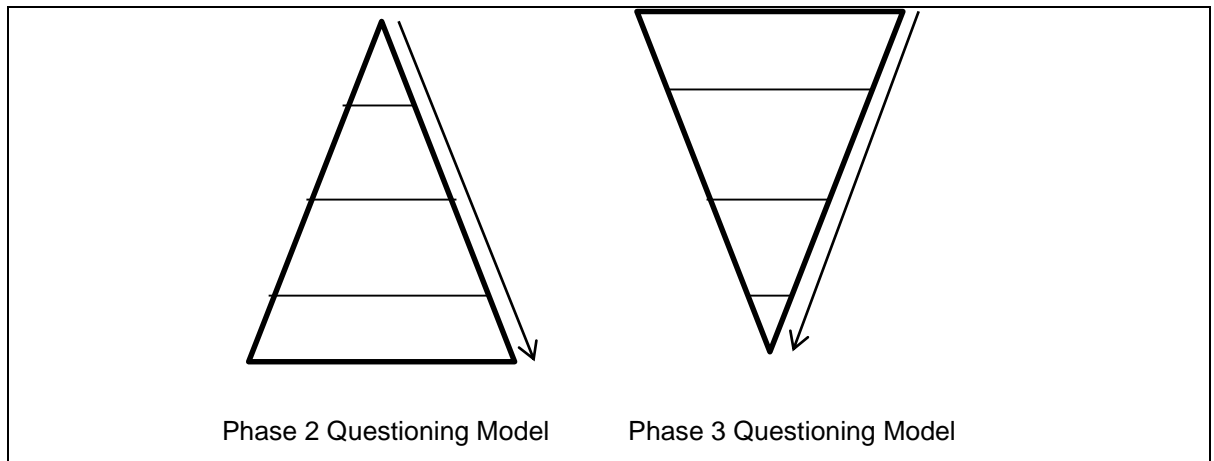
The cases highlighted discrepancies of form and function of questions between each phase. As discussed, the form of question cycles reverted to a more controlled form. During Phase 2 children were encouraged to contribute detailed accounts structured within the teacher's questions. Phase 3 initially gave children opportunities to engage within dialogue. However, children were not sufficiently prepared to participate and, as a result it, became too stressful. The lessons suggested that children either did not understand the breadth of the question, due to too many variables for answers, or had difficulty pinpointing the correct interpretation. Therefore, Phase 3 observations saw questioning restricting knowledge and understanding, rather than promoting active engagement. As a result, the form of questions took on the role of instructions. Despite the mathematics teacher adopting sequences of closed questions to establish learning objectives and key word definitions, towards the end of the lesson some children had difficulties in contributing to more open dialogue. Children were acquainted with the role and purpose of keywords and some managed to engage in learning discussion. However, in comparison to the drama lesson, the teacher approached such question cycles with an 'open' question and gradually narrowed participation by minimising answers.

**Teacher:** Not quite. Let's have a look. So you've correctly worked out 50%, so let's do the whole thing her which is £100, you've correctly worked out that half of £100 is 50, yes? SO what's a quarter? What do we need to do to a half to get a quarter? **(Child shrugs shoulders)** Can you draw a line on this to divide it in to quarters? Draw a line on that circle to divide it into four quarters.

**Child:** What. Like that?

**Teacher:** Yes, brilliant. So, if we know that each side is 50 then you've just cut it in half again. What's going to go into each of those two bits?

**Case 2:** Phase 3 mathematics lesson observation



**Figure 6.6:** Phase 2 and Phase 3 questioning models

The function of questions between Phases 2 and 3 shared some similarities. Mainly, that of teachers checking that children understood tasks set and considered classroom routines. However, differences emerged as primary lessons focused children on continually assessing the understanding and roles of key vocabulary. Lessons were driven by providing, checking and implementing definitions. As a result, children incorporated discussion conclusions into their work. The function of questions was to model and scaffold understanding.

**(Teacher structuring a whole class discussion on how to increase funding for the children's project)**

**Teacher:** What do you need to do for a loan?

**Child 1:** We need to write to [Finance Officer].

**Teacher:** So we're going to write a formal letter. Then what are we going to do? Just give her a formal letter? Is that going to do it? Dear [Finance Officer] we really like to . . . is that going to be enough? What do we need to provide her with? [Child 2]?

**Child 2:** Some information about what we are doing.

**Teacher:** OK. We need to provide her with some info' on what you're selling. What else?

**Child 3:** How we are going to pay the money back.

**Case 1:** Phase 2 lesson observation

Phase 3 offered questioning strategies for children to engage in learning outcomes. However, two discrepancies emerged. The first concerned the Year 7 teachers' assumption of prior knowledge developed in primary school. Both observed lessons replicated work already completed. The drama lesson objectives were based on key points of a story and the mathematics lesson focused on fractions, decimals and percentages. The function of questions was to offer strategies to contribute to the child's learning. However, there was no evidence that the teachers had identified prior learning with the children, or that strategies deployed replicated those already taught. Therefore, the children did not

recognise prior knowledge. The second discrepancy identified questions as tools designed to equip children with the necessary skills to complete the task set. Teachers employed questions that acted as signposts within the lesson. Therefore, questions were task-driven by pre-empting suggestions for children to work independently.

**Teacher:** This group of four [Name] I'm going to give them the key . . . one of the key points, and your key point is going to be that a monkey has to appear. I want you to create a whole scene alright, where this monkey appears. It doesn't have to be in a loft because up there it doesn't say 'in the loft'. We're just focusing on the middle and it doesn't say 'in the loft' does it?

**Child:** No.

**Teacher:** Does it say 'old lady'?

**Child:** No. It just says 'in the middle monkey appears'.

**Teacher:** That's right, I just says 'in the middle monkey appears'. I want you to create any scene you want about a monkey appearing, OK?

#### **Case 2:** Phase 2 drama lesson observation

Across cases, questioning strategies offered a variety of purposes that contributed to knowledge and skill development. However, their primary aim was to engage children in learning dialogues. The analysis suggested that children found participating in some dialogues more stressful than others. For example, children eagerly contributed to discussions through which teachers assessed prior learning and knowledge. This was evident throughout Phase 2 lessons. However, children felt pressurised when they did not recognise prior learning. This increased stress and prohibited coherency and participation. In addition, children did not respond to broad questioning strategies that offered more than one answer. Children were more successful when teachers approached these types of questions to conclude a sequence, rather than to start one. Therefore, evidence suggests that to ease the transition period, there need to be commonalities in learning strategies; acknowledgement of how curriculum areas were taught; and consistency in the form and function of questions.

#### **6.4.4 Differences in terminology used within subjects between Year 6 and Year 7**

Research suggests that many children use grammatical forms in their writing that are structurally more complex than within their speech (Wood, 1998 p210). This implies that a child absorbs more through the written word, and questions whether becoming literate is a social experience. However, Wells (2003) suggests that meaning occurs through contributions to discourse and not as isolated events. It is an expectation that within classroom environments children become academically and socially literate in order to

function as life-long learners. There is also an expectation that children adapt to learning situations by adopting routines and language systems that are dependent on context and driven by interactions within learning mesosystems (Tholander, 2011; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In relation to the transition period, this debate raises two issues. The first considers a child's ability to internalise knowledge and transform this into new learning contexts. The second considers the consistency of terminology used to ensure a successful continuum of learning. This study highlighted specific incidents in which learning was inhibited due to language demands placed on children by their teachers, and language demands children placed on themselves as learners.

Children claimed that there were inconsistencies of teacher expectations that affected their transition. Expectations related to the use of subject-specific terminology. Phase 1 highlighted differences in vocabularies used by Year 6 and Year 7 teachers. For example, the sample children in Case 2 spoke of conflict between using the terms 'germs' and 'bacteria'. Teachers told them not to use the term 'germ' as in Year 7 they would use 'bacteria'. However, in their exercise books they had to write 'germ'. Such conflict heightened anxiety and frustration, as children had the oral ability to define bacteria, but could not use the term in their writing. As a result, terminology decisions were made by individual subject teachers, rather than collectively in curriculum content. Throughout the study, the divide between complex use of language in primary and secondary education was a recurrent theme. As the sample children compared experiences between Years 6 and 7, hierarchical explanations of language use emerged. Across all cases, children detailed 'posh' and sophisticated language used by their secondary school teachers. However, throughout exchanges children struggled to define words and associate them across contexts. Not only did this question children's adaptation to new curriculum areas through the adoption of subject-specific language (Thorlander, 2011), but restricted participation in learning dialogue. Therefore, inconsistent use of terminology decreased children's learning confidence in whole class and group activities.

**Researcher:** Is the vocabulary you used in Year 6 being used again in Year 7?

**Child 2:** No. [Teachers] all just use these fancy words and it's really hard [ . . . ]

**Child 4:** Because in Year 6 you'd be using the little words like . . . sometimes the odd day or two they would use something like, just so you know what the posh word is, the fancy word is. They'd use like 'germs', or 'bugs' and stuff like that. You wouldn't really say any like massive words.

**Case 2:** Phase 3 student voice activity

In addition, teacher expectations of children's learning are situated in how teachers used prior learning experiences to influence continuity throughout the transition period.

Analysis suggested that in teacher-dominated environments, repetition of learning increased anxiety. The sample children spoke of the need to make a good impression on their new teachers, as this would define future relationships with them. However, teachers also were required to make good impressions on their new learners. Case 1 identified different qualities of teachers. Some teachers challenged learning and made learning exciting by increased demands of vocabulary, subject matter and transferrable knowledge. Others negatively challenged learning by minimising the skills and abilities of their learners and adopting a 'lecture' style approach to lessons. Teachers were described as using 'sixth-form' language and acknowledging this to the class. Doing so, disengaged the children, and increased language demand because the children were not able to seek clarification on key concepts.

**Child 2:** In art we've been doing shading and drawing with pencil and we've done that in primary so it's quite easy. We've already done shading in different tones and it was really boring because they were just blabbing on that you need to have a pencil and hold it like this even though we know what to do.

**Child 4:** There's some teachers who just say a few words and off you go with a recipe. But you're not allowed to ask them any questions because you just have to read it by yourself and understand it. But then other teachers will explain it a lot more and I quite like it because I know what to do.

**Child 6:** Because they don't know what we've done, they think we may know nothing.

#### **Case 1:** Phase 3 student voice activity

Adaptation into the sample children's new setting highlighted issues with transferring vocabularies from one context into another. Chapter 5 discussed how the children failed to recognise the term 'vibrant' – known in Year 6 – in their Year 7 English lesson. In addition, it considered the need for the mathematics teacher to readdress the concept of fractions, decimals and percentages. Such analogies concluded that children have the ability to recognise language in isolated contexts, but failed to retrieve information when contributing to other dialogues. As a result, the children dismissed their prior teaching of concepts, and language demand was increased in their new setting. Year 6 lesson observation noted children learning new vocabulary by rote, through questioning and applying words in their exercise books, and by sharing work with others within the class. Children confidently retrieved information by placing it in the context of their learning. However, the analysis demonstrated that in Year 7 some children failed to 'adopt' pre-taught vocabularies and therefore struggled to 'adapt' into new learning regimes. This had the potential to affect learning behaviours in formal and informal situations within the transition period.



#### 6.4.5 Summary of Question 3

Throughout this study, issues with language demand have proved to be the most complex issue associated with the transition period. The use of language governs the quality of learning interaction within the classroom. Children are immersed in language to acquire, consolidate and review knowledge. However, within this immersion roles and responsibilities emerge. The study defines the transition period as one of adaptation whereby children bring a series of tools to develop and acquire knowledge within a new setting. Therefore, if language systems are consistent between settings, children become learning-literate as a part of a developing social experience. The experience considers the child operating in learning mesosystems and their interaction within various microsystems.

This study highlighted language clusters and roles that children developed in order to complete an independent learning activity. The defined clusters were consistent in each activity, with evidence of the sample children's contribution being identical in each research phase. The analysis further considered hierarchical relationships within the language systems. It developed the concept of interchanging language relationships within a given task. As a result, children did not move between clusters, but interacted within a language cluster contributing as 'consultant', 'leader', 'engineer', 'technician' or 'worker'. Furthering the notion of interaction, the analysis identified how participants initiated and moved dialogue along through the recognition of social cues. Prior to the study, it was expected that children had the ability to repair and resolve conflict during conversation. However, this research suggested that some children could not respond to instruction if they did not understand specific requirements fully, or that they would remove themselves from stressful situations by shuffling in their seats or by losing eye contact. Despite teachers modelling good understanding of social participation, children often neglected to interpret these group activities. Teachers continually reacted to the minutiae of classroom routines. The teacher circulated around groups of differing activities contributing to task progression. However, differences emerged between research phases. During Phase 2, the teacher engaged in learning talk by using instructions and questions to improve work. Phase 3 teachers contributed significantly to the task by offering suggestions and immersing themselves as participants within the groups. In addition, differences developed in the form and function of questioning.

Phase 2 used progressive questioning within a sequence that was focused when it began and broadened as concepts instilled. By the end of the sequence, children had the ability to engage confidently in dialogue using constructive language to explain and identify

key points. However, Phase 3 offered a reversed pattern. The data suggest that teachers began question cycles using open techniques, therefore offering more than one answer. However, children found this experience stressful, and by the end of the sequence, teachers requested one or two word utterances. Language demand increased sufficiently for children to gain little benefit from their lesson and participate in an almost unchallenging learning environment. Each case did not identify commonalities of language to support continuous learning. As a result, the study suggests that changes in language demand within individual contexts offer children greater challenges at transition.

## **6.5 Summary of Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 used the research questions to deepen the analysis offered in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 highlighted contexts of transition in three distinct cases; Chapter 6 interrogated this using the framework of the research questions. Situating differing contexts in learning mesosystems and microsystems furthered understanding in changing dyadic and group interactions during the children's transition period from primary to secondary school.

The response to Question 1 detailed the relationship between teacher and child. Each was defined as a social participator in learning. It considered changing attachments of early pubescent children as they advanced through middle childhood. The study suggested that Year 6 teachers faced many pedagogical dilemmas moving a child from close learning attachments to independent participants in learning activities. In effect, from an intense child-teacher relationship to the multifarious relationships developed within secondary education. As a result the transition period offered disjointed provision with children moving from intense preparation for Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs), to a creative curriculum, and finally to the 'rigours' of Year 7. The application of Wertsch and Tulviste's (1992) conclusion, that for children to succeed they need to master culturally explicit tools, provided a grounding to understand the teacher perceptions and reactions to SATs on a child's learning. Cognition, memory and attention are socially shared within a framework of voluntary attention, development of volition, logical memory and the formation of concepts. To access tests children were required to master these attributes in order to operate independently. As a result, the framework provided a further subsystem within the concept of a learning microsystem.

In addition, Question 1 considered further teachers' influences on transfer. The study claimed that family members and teacher impressions – rather than peers – generated

myth. Across each case, teachers' perceptions were founded on past memories of their school days, their limited experience of Year 7, or observations of secondary school children. Despite formal transition work beginning post SATs, children's anxieties developed from the start of their Year 6. Their anxieties stemmed from teachers' interpretation of homework and 'stricter' routines to prepare for Year 7. However, children spoke of greater anxiety during the creative work post SATs and the relaxed homework and routines offered.

Question 2 considered children's development of independent learning through the transition period. The literature drew on recent definitions of independent learning (Bullock and Wikeley, 2004; Meyer *et al*, 2008; TES, 2008). In addition, it compared theories of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) who identified children as continually learning by adapting to new environments and Piaget's model of cognitive adaptation of an organism and their environment (Meadows, 2010). Further consideration of SATs identified the high stakes culture of external testing (Galton *et al*, 1999a). Each case spoke of political pressures schools faced in terms of public accountability. Within this culture, SATs clouded the challenge of the level and retention of learning during transfer. The study confirmed that high ability children made sustainable progress. Less able children's progress remained static, resulting in less confident learners making slower progress. Each case established that for progressive learning, children need to learn how to learn. If learning tools were used consistently, children would have the ability to transfer knowledge between differing contexts.

Question 2 uncovered expectations of teacher-child relationships. The study identified a framework of social learning participation derived from scaffolding, language, assessment, behaviour and motivation (Azmitia, 2006; Meyer *et al*, 2008). Within each category, data highlighted similarities between teacher and pupil. In addition, analysis concluded that for successful interaction, participants needed to be motivated to learn. Furthering the notion of subsystems within a microsystem, the categories identified consistent learning conversation cycles (Figure 6.2). Differences between Phases 2 and 3 emerged when children worked in isolation from the teacher. Within the conversation cycle, Phase 2 concluded that children had the ability to move tasks forward by planning, reflecting and evaluating work. Phase 3 offered fewer opportunities to reflect and engage in learning activities. Analysis suggested that this was a product of a change in learning culture between Years 6 and 7. Hierarchical relationships emerged across each case that were situated in both the learning mesosystem and microsystem. Language systems linked learning, activity, roles and behaviours, and guided social behaviour codes (Foreman and

Cazden, 1985). The teacher provided skills and learning experience. The children adopted roles of social participants who internalised, sustained and implemented new knowledge. However, differing roles resulted in varying knowledge acquisition. Data suggested distinct differences in developing knowledge between 'expert' and 'novice' relations. The 'expert' had the ability to transform the 'novice' into 'expert'. However, learning was not sustained if the 'novice' did not change role, or in there was 'novice-to-novice' interaction. During lesson observations, Phase 3 observed some children continually adopting the role of novices that affected group and individual work.

Question 3 deepened understanding of hierarchical roles into the development of language clusters. The independent learning activity defined varying dialogue structures transferred into Year 7. These were categorised as 'consultant', 'leader', 'engineer', 'technician' and 'worker'. Table 6.3 defines the language roles. Throughout the activity children worked within dyads and triads that developed further understanding of effective learning strategies between 'expert' and 'novice'. However, the analogy questions whether teachers initially treat all Year 7 children as 'workers', reaffirming the notion that secondary schools start children off with a blank sheet (Galton *et al*, 1999b; Gorwood, 1991). Complexity of language is associated with reading and reacting to social cues. The study suggested that teachers respond to minutiae of verbal, non-verbal, body- and facial-language. Three teacher response categories emerged:

- the child's misunderstanding of the task.
- the child unsure of how to progress.
- the child's response to the teacher's actions.

The children had the ability to react to social cues within teacher-led environments, but struggled in peer-led environments. Differences emerged between Phases 2 and 3. The effects of peer-pressure diminished on-task dialogue and the reading of social cues. In Phase 3, some children reacted negatively towards others. This was observed with participants competing with each other in terms of elaborate story-telling or avoiding task progression, not in poor behaviour.

Language demand highlighted other differences between research phases. Lesson observations identified discrepancies in the form and function of teachers' questions (Mercer and Littleton, 2007). The study observed Phase 2 teachers scaffolding sequences of questions from 'closed' to 'open'. At the end of the sequence, children had sufficient knowledge and understanding to give more than one answer, or to justify their reasoning.

Phase 3 teachers reversed the sequence. As a result, children's anxiety increased, as they had not rehearsed sequences that led to multiple answers. The function of questions also differed. Phase 2 questions focused on teachers checking for understanding of tasks, assessing the understanding of key concepts and defining keywords. Phase 3 questions ensured that children were engaged with the learning outcomes of the lesson.

Other discrepancies included differences in terminology of subject-specific language. This was two-fold. Firstly, children learnt different related terms in subjects. Secondly, on entering secondary school some children could not recall keywords learnt in their primary school. The sample children spoke of further anxieties associated with language demand. On entering Year 7 they wanted to establish good academic and social relationships with their teachers. They were looking forward to new challenges in their learning. However, some children spoke of poor relationships caused by too much challenge, for example, teachers using and acknowledging sixth-form language in lessons.

This chapter highlighted issues with transfer. For some children, these issues had a detrimental effect on their learning during the transition period. These children may be the 15% identified by Evans *et al* (2010) that fails to thrive in the secondary context. In addition, the study acknowledges similarities and differences between highly complex learning systems in Years 6 and 7, and, as a result, furthers Bronfenbrenner's perception of interactions contained within mesosystem and microsystem framed within the bioecological framework.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions

*'If the children and youth of a nation are afforded opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest, if they are given the knowledge to understand the world and the wisdom to change it, then the prospects for the future are bright.'*

**(Bronfenbrenner, 1973 p1)**

#### 7.1 Introduction

Why is it that children in Year 6 have the ability to construct stories independently, yet at the start of Year 7 the same children have difficulties recalling this knowledge and understanding? Since this is the question that prompted this study, and frames the analysis of the data collected, it is important that this final chapter of the thesis contains a response. The study observed children in Year 6 recreating stories based on the fairy tale 'Cinderella', when the children described the characters, situations and plot in detail. However, in Year 7, they failed to recognise the importance of each element in reconstructing a class-initiated story.

This study highlighted three significant issues associated with transition. The first considered the discontinuity of a child's learning throughout the transition period. The second highlighted accountabilities of teachers and their students in their performance in Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). The third concerned different ways in which language is used in form and function between primary and secondary school.

This study raised further questions of children's ability to adapt, participate and thrive in new learning contexts. Differences in classroom routines, pedagogies and use of language emerged between primary and secondary contexts. This thesis highlights the impact of these differences within a child's mesosystem and microsystem, and the subsequent effect on their abilities to transfer and transform independent learning throughout the transition period. Successful transfer of learning equates to consistency of practice between *all* contexts. For a child to construct stories independently in Years 6 and 7, they should not be 'told' why or 'shown' how, but should have developed understanding of how to approach the task.

This study focused on three distinct modes of transition of children transferring from primary school to secondary school. Initial preconceptions expected Case 2 to offer the best approach and philosophy for children's transition, as in this case children did not transfer into a new destination school with new routines and curriculum structures, nor were required to develop relationships with 'new' teachers or peers. Instead, the majority of children in Case 2 moved within the same building to their new experiences of secondary-style classrooms and teachers. However, this preconception was not wholly supported by the study, and Case 2 revealed transition issues similar to those associated with Cases 1 and 3. Issues due to inconsistencies of learning experience were identified between Years 6 and 7 across the three cases. These issues included:

- the use, and development, of academic language between Year 6 and Year 7.
- teachers' reliance on their 'own' school experience, and imagination, to promote positive transition for their classes.
- teachers talking in ways that promoted independent learning opportunities.
- the way that SATs distorted an otherwise continuous and progressive curriculum during the transition period.
- inconsistencies associated with language demands between primary and secondary school. These included expectations that children would explore, reason and develop language skills to solve problems within the various microsystems that different learning environments offered.

Therefore, the original contribution of this study not only recognised the comparison of three unique transition models, but also considered the impact that language has on a child's continuous learning experience throughout the transition period. Clearly, the requisites for smooth transition lie beyond familiar buildings and procedures. This chapter evaluates common and case-specific issues, drawing on discussions provided in previous chapters of the thesis.

The study drew on a wealth of existing literature that placed transition into the macro-level of research (Muschamp, 2011), defining effective policy and procedural devices to ensure a seamless transfer. Yet, research recognises that there is still a persistent

proportion of children struggling at the point of transition, with 15% of transferring children failing to thrive within the contexts of their secondary school (Evans *et al*, 2010). The majority of children who struggled were defined as 'vulnerable' and were categorised as having additional educational need and disability: some were from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, and from families without knowledge and understanding of the education system (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Evans *et al*, 2010). Despite the effect these disadvantages had on children's educational lives, research did not offer solutions or understanding for those children who were, or were not, categorised as vulnerable. In today's society, it is unacceptable that 15% of children face difficulties at transfer, and potentially spiral out of an inclusive education system. This study provides further understanding of children's learning so that teaching professionals can ensure that *all* children's learning is progressive and exciting, no matter what stage the child is at in their educational journey.

This study recognises conclusions and recommendations from existing transition research, in particular the need for a child to make three areas of adjustment within their destination schools: that is, social, institutional, and curriculum adjustments (Evangelou *et al*, 2008; Hargreaves and Galton, 2002; Measor and Woods, 1984). However, this study deepened understanding of these three concepts by considering the impact of teacher provision during transition; barriers to children's seamless independent learning; and language demands placed on children during transfer. This study immersed transition research into the inner layers of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems by analysing learning development and interaction within meso- and micro-level analysis.

## **7.2 Questions developed throughout this study**

This study prompted four additional questions to provide further understanding of a child's transition from primary to secondary education. Each, grounded within the research question, was developed within the analysis. Reflection on these questions is required in order to understand and change existing transition practice.

1. Teachers continually work to improve the standing of the school. Does this get in the way of independent and sustainable learning?
2. Are definitions of independent learning consistent between primary and secondary school?



3. Are children continually challenged in their learning, or do children consistently work at 'worker' level as explained in section 6.4.1?
4. Do teachers acknowledge 'experts' in their classroom?

This section reflects on these questions and challenges each case's transition model suggesting that each has imperfections for sustainable learning. Questions are embedded into teacher provision offered during transition; barriers to the continuous development of independent learning; and challenges of language demands between learning contexts.

### **7.2.1 Teacher provision during the transition period**

When developing themes from the cited transition studies, the class teacher plays a pivotal role in preparing children for their transition to secondary school. There is an expectation that teachers provide academic, emotional and social support throughout the transition period. This study recognised that all sample children across the three cases spoke fondly of their Year 6 teachers, as they felt safe and supported in their learning environments. However, within this pivotal role, the study suggests that teachers face three potential barriers in providing effective provision during transfer. Firstly, their focus during Year 6 is to ensure that children are prepared for SATs. Secondly, teachers are required to ensure consistent and effective delivery of provision between primary and secondary curricula. Thirdly, in order to ensure effective provision they need to promote a positive experience of transfer.

This study recognises the potential pressures that SATs place on classroom experiences. Teachers are working to improve the standing of their schools, both locally and nationally, and, to do so, focus on ensuring that all children's individual targets are met and exceeded. End of Key Stage external assessments offer a further layer of accountability to teachers. Therefore, SATs force a transition curriculum that ensures children can access tests and have sufficient knowledge and understanding to pass them. Thus, the curriculum was restricted for some children, with them not developing independence within their learning, but instead being fed facts and test-based skills. Each case study recognised these pressures affecting classroom practice and learning. Participants questioned the role and purpose of SATs, as teachers had the skills to assess

and standardise children's work across all curriculum areas. As a result, the study identified two main effects of SATs on children's learning progression and transition experience.

- Firstly, demanding a curriculum that was test-based neglected creative areas of the syllabus. For Cases 2 and 3, it was suggested that SATs narrowed provision because they impinged on foundation subjects. This meant that children were ill-prepared for Year 7, with limited prior knowledge and experience of some subjects. All cases recognised that the time spent preparing children for SATs was taken from foundation subjects.
- Secondly, opportunities post-SATs condensed – rather than expanded – creative curriculum experiences. The sample children referred to this as 'down-time', as it offered opportunities to relax before the rigours of Year 7. However, teachers provided 'catch up' opportunities by offering topic and creative work as part of the transition programme and preparation for foundation subjects in Year 7. The sample children did not recognise this experience as learning, and felt that the post-SATs period increased anxiety about transition.

The wider concept of provision considers teachers' expectations of classroom learning. This study recognised differing expectations between primary and secondary school. Issues of data exchange emerged, particularly regarding the secondary school recipients of the data that were carefully prepared by Year 6 class teachers, as it was stated that secondary schools were only interested in SATs results. However, the underlying issue was insufficient communication between primary and secondary schools. In order to move a child smoothly from an almost singular learning environment into a multifarious learning environment, each teacher/recipient requires sufficient data to prevent disruptions in the learning process. Therefore, all participants recognised the need to 'know' transferring children in order to maximise learning participation and minimise the children's anxiety by removing the notion of 'strangers', and continual reinforcing of teacher-learner relationships.

However, expectations in learning were more deep-rooted than issues relating to data transfer. This study recognised differences in classroom practice. Within the primary setting, established relationships between the child, their teacher and their peers increased learning participation. Children were familiar with their learning environment and confidently responded to class discussion and moved easily between learning situations. However, lessons observed in Year 7 appeared more formal, with work being teacher-led and tightly scaffolded. Social networks within the class were also teacher-led and children

demonstrated little independence within the learning environment. During Phase 3, teachers continually communicated with the whole class, rather than subgroups or individuals. This was a distinct departure from primary classrooms, where teachers frequently communicated with a range of individuals and subgroups, and addressed the whole class on more limited occasions. The study suggests that teachers start Year 7 children with 'apparent' new routines, and neglect relationships forged within the primary school. They overlook the reality that transferring children already know how to participate and react in learning cultures. Confidence and consistency of classroom practice between transfer schools will help alleviate potential barriers to learning.

Perhaps the most complex issue stems from teachers promoting positive experiences of transfer. Year 6 teachers had limited experiences of secondary schools, and *vice versa*. On a macro-level, preliminary stakeholder interviews suggested that teacher training providers and national professional development organisations provide little, if any, training on transition. Therefore, teachers rely on their own school experiences, and impressions gained during minimal visits, to ensure children are prepared for secondary school. As a result, at the meso-level this study suggests that teacher support for transferring children distorts reality by merging it with fiction. Analysis identified that, in preparing children for Year 7, Year 6 teachers provided lessons that were influenced by their perceptions of secondary school. These included open-ended tasks, and teacher-directed activity that removed concepts of independent learning. Teachers did not encourage children to learn how to learn, but how to complete set tasks. This mirrored findings associated with preparation for SATs. In addition, transition preparation included frameworks for the setting and completion of homework, establishing firmer sanctions, and providing children with thinking time to solve any work-related problems. Throughout Year 6, the sample children identified secondary school with these features, and as a result, this increased anxiety.

These issues suggest a tentative link to the analysis of 'expert' and 'novice' dyad relationships. The study concluded that for successful learning, an imbalance of 'expert' to 'novice' relationship is required, as 'novice-to-novice' relationships do not promote effective learning, because neither side has adequate skills to scaffold unfamiliar tasks. In relation to transition, this study suggests that some teachers are not 'experts' and provide children with balanced 'novice' relationships. Therefore, lack of transition training for teachers and their experience underpin teacher inadequacies that inhibit the child from moving from 'novice' to 'expert'. This can only heighten insecurities at transfer.

### **7.2.2 Barriers to the continuous development of independent learning**

This study categorises learning during the transition period into four distinct phases labelled as pre-SATs, SATs, post-SATs and post-transfer. Each develops a continuum of education in which children are required to learn, develop and apply knowledge to areas within the curriculum and within the varying contexts offered by each school. Intertwined with each phase is the formal programme of transition that includes visits and the application process to their destination school. However, for many children transition processes begin prior to Year 6. During this time, they hear stories and family experiences, and observe behaviours of older children. In addition, the children develop awareness of the pressures associated with SATs. In Year 5, the sample children observed older peers sitting tests and teachers equating subject knowledge learnt in Year 5 to SATs. Therefore, in all cases the sample children spoke of their preconceived ideas of Year 6, which, for some, began a spiral of anxieties that developed throughout their transition process. This study recognised two further barriers to a child's learning.

The first considered the distortion of SATs on both a child's development of independent learning, and also on the routines of learning. Data analysis of interviews and lesson observations revealed that children developed reliance on their teacher for knowledge and techniques to access test papers. Children's learning was challenged through recall, rather than adaptation to other subjects and contexts, which removed the quality of independent learning. During the post-SATs period, children were expected to relate knowledge to a variety of contexts, for example, Case 2's pre-SATs lesson observation consisted of a focused literacy lesson developing key points of a story. The lesson did not deviate from the subject. However, post-SATs observations observed children completing cross-curricular projects. Case 1's lesson required children to recognise elements of literacy within their mathematics lesson. Case 3 required children to associate literacy techniques within art and information technology. In addition, learning routines differed. Pre-SATs activities were teacher-led, for example, Case 2 observed the teacher scaffolding information to the whole class and individual groups. The lesson focused on key learning objectives and assessment levels associated with each task. Post-SATs observed flexibility, with teachers actively contributing, rather than scaffolding knowledge and understanding.

The second barrier arises from the complex definitions of independent learning. Literature suggests that independent learning gives a child independent skills to explore and reason with developing and new knowledge. Debates suggest that if learners have

greater understanding of their learning process, they will have more control in organising and internalising knowledge (Barton, 2007). Therefore, understanding learning processes deepens the understanding of independent learning. However, this study raises questions about the consistency of defining independent learning between primary and secondary school. All stakeholders within the primary settings concluded that they released confident learners into Year 7, as these skills were recognised within the limited environments in which the child operated. However, there is a substantial increase in challenge when children transfer learning skills into a multifarious context. This study suggests that children are in a continual learning process of reconstructing learning mesosystems through participation and interactions in microsystems. Within the primary setting, there is consistent participation throughout the school day; as a result, independent learning skills remain a constant. However, as mesosystems increase, challenges in learning are manifested. This explanation begins to develop understanding of why children in Year 6 have the ability to construct stories independently, but at the start of Year 7 the same children have difficulties recalling this knowledge and understanding.

### **7.2.3 Challenges of language demands between learning contexts**

The case studies highlighted comparable issues associated with language demands. It is suggested that demands in developing and understanding learning and subject-specific language were evident in differing dialogues between teacher and child, and within child group activities. In Year 7 whole-class lesson activities some children struggled to identify key concepts and to link prior knowledge into existing and new learning contexts; this issue was then transferred into group activities. However, throughout the independent learning activities, children identified existing knowledge and transferred this successfully to ensure continuity of the task set. This paradox highlighted three recurring issues throughout the transfer period that affected challenges in learning.

- The continuity of subject language during the SATs period and Year 7.
- Identification of language clusters within group work influencing teachers' use of language to challenge and renew experiences of children in Year 7.

- The participants' application and development of their 'expert' and 'novice' roles while scaffolding new learning concepts. In particular, in their questioning strategies and use of dialogue to keep tasks focused and progressive.

Initial analysis highlighted children's anxiety concerning conflicting terminology used in lessons. For example, the sample children identified the term 'germs' that had been used in Year 6, and the term 'bacteria' that was used in Year 7. This was not an isolated example. During the Year 6 student voice activities, children reflected on the rehearsal of key terminology used to access SATs papers. Case 1 identified that teachers issued a 'trickier vocabulary books' for mathematics. These were rehearsed regularly by 'rote', with children learning the spellings, rather than placing key terms in context. Other instances identified included learning shorthand terms, for example, 'dp' instead of 'decimal place.' Again, according to the children's reflection, these terms were not consistently placed in context. Post-SATs minimised rehearsal of subject terminology by attempting to place learnt concepts into a broader, more creative curriculum. It seemed that children did not have sufficient rehearsal skills to acknowledge that they were learning, and that teachers attempted to place learning into a variety of contexts. As a result, Year 7 analysis identified that children could not place subject-specific vocabulary into lesson contexts. For example, in Year 7 the sample children spoke of learning new vocabularies of 'texture' and 'tone', although the use of this language was observed in Year 6.

Analysis of the independent learning activities concluded that children replicated identical language clusters, or roles, in both Years 6 and 7. These roles were labelled as 'consultant', 'leader', 'engineer', 'technician' and 'worker'. The least challenged individual was the worker, who carried out all tasks requested with little input or opposition. During group activities in Year 6 and Year 7, children readily used tools of independent learning to complete set tasks. For example, children had the ability to scaffold learning when a peer struggled with the concept and application of the task.

However, such clusters were not readily recognised in observations of Year 7 lessons. Children responded to tasks set by relying on their teacher to generate ideas and understanding before proceeding. In the observed lessons, teachers regularly visited groups of children, inputting and structuring their ideas to ensure successful completion of the task. As a result, children developed tasks at 'worker' level with minimal self-challenge and progress. Therefore, analysis of data concluded that at the start of year 7, children disassociated language learnt in pre-SATs that equipped them to explore and reason concepts. The irony is that the data suggested that children had the ability to transfer

language roles developed in the independent learning activity pre-transfer to the post-transfer period. Therefore, children had the ability to challenge themselves in learning in Year 7, but teachers' expectations and inconsistency of provision only challenged learning at 'worker' level. This conclusion is similar to that of Gorwood (1994) who surmised that teachers used Year 7 to 'benchmark' and 'start afresh' in children's learning. However, this study suggests that teachers do not 'start afresh', but are required to build learning relationships and 'rebuild' independent learning skills that children developed during the pre-SATs period in order to reintroduce learners to their innate language clusters, or roles.

This study identified complex issues associated with participants adopting and developing 'expert' and 'novice' roles within learning. Initial preconceptions were that these roles were based on prior learning experience and knowledge. However, roles identified were task-dependent, with participants drawing on previous skills and placing them in current situations. Another preconception identified the teacher, or a more able peer, as the 'expert', scaffolding learning to ensure the 'novice' moved to 'expert' within each independent task. However, this study suggests that roles are interchangeable, no matter the ability or experience of the child. This study also suggests that ability and experience contribute to the use of questioning and reading of social cues that enable a 'novice' to move quickly to 'expert' status, or to offer strategies and skills to resolve learning challenges. However, it also recognised that 'novice-to-novice' relationships do not move either individual to 'expert'. For example, one Case 2 lesson observation identified both the teacher and child's inability to spell 'limousine'. Despite the teacher's experience of giving strategies for the child to explore the correct spelling, neither could resolve the issue, and each moved on to the next learning challenge.

Language demands recognised the use of questioning, either to move learning forward or to consolidate key concepts. However, this study identified inconsistencies of questioning between Years 6 and 7. Year 6 developed series of 'closed' questions for children to answer. These focused on keywords associated with the task. As children grew confident in the use of subject vocabulary, teachers broadened questions to initiate and structure subject-specific discussion. Year 7 mirrored this model through exploring the knowledge children had acquired from previous learning situations. However, children did not rehearse vocabularies sufficiently and failed to respond to questions asked. As a result, the teacher had to reverse concepts to 'closed' questioning. Lesson observations suggested that children lost confidence in the immediate learning context and did not respond to teacher-initiated class discussion. Therefore, inconsistencies of application of learning strategies diminished learning confidence and responses.

### 7.3 Evaluation, feedback and recommendations to case study schools

This study provided an evaluation of each case's transition programme, so feedback was imperative to inform future changes and evaluation programmes. Initially, the feedback was organised for senior leadership teams, and individually structured according to needs of the school. In addition, Case 1 requested further feedback to their Year 6 teachers, and, since completion of the thesis, Case 2 has requested further feedback to their extended leadership team. Each case understood and embraced the importance of children's transition and, because of this research, case study schools have implemented changes to existing provision, and highlighted future areas for development. The feedback framework consisted of the points listed below.

- **Summary of tools for data collection:** description of preliminary investigation interviews, and data-collection activities for Phases 2 and 3, with their rationale.
- **Demographic analysis:** this allowed checking for accuracy and understanding of the school's context.
- **Placing the context of each case in context:** this developed understanding of each case's transfer model.
- **Initial findings on the case's transfer model:** this drew on initial analysis and individualised case study reports.
- **Recommendations:** this focused on transfer, language mechanisms within teaching, and consistencies in teaching and learning throughout the transfer period.
- **Permission to publish the final thesis was obtained.**

#### 7.3.1 Case 1 feedback

Feedback to the headteacher was positive. The headteacher recognised the potential impact of the research on the school's transition programme, and, in particular, on



both the consistency of teaching and learning between the children's primary school, and their experience of the destination school. It was recognised that children's anxiety about transfer manifested itself from the very start of Year 6, and heightened in the post-SATs period, when classroom and homework routines became inconsistent. Further discussions focused on partnerships with destination schools. It became apparent that in order to improve transition provision, the school had to take a more proactive role in the transfer process. Therefore, it was recommended that they lead on joint transition policies with the destination schools. Finally, discussions focused on demographic analysis and the effects of transition on differing groups of children within the classroom. The school has enhanced provision and has established excellent 'value-added' scores in terms of children's attainment, with over 85% of their Year 6 cohort achieving Level 4+ in reading and writing. The school is interested in developing this research further by following the sample of children from the case study throughout their compulsory education, and tracking their attainment and progress. Findings from the research are documented in the school's self-evaluation framework and development plans.

Feedback to teachers was classroom-focused and offered recommendations to enhance teaching and learning during the transition period, and advice about minimising anxieties associated with transfer. This framework outlined the successes of Year 6 and potential areas for development. Successful areas from this study included the following:

- throughout the study, children spoke with fondness of their Year 6 teachers and appreciated the fantastic support they received from them. They felt mature and valued as students.
- the children felt their Year 6 was positive and challenging. They enjoyed homework routines and a positive SATs experience.
- the children appreciated transition work at the end of Year 6, especially regarding travel arrangements and working with partners.
- children enjoyed learning opportunities provided and the creativity displayed by their teachers.
- children felt supported by having the experience of a Year 7 teacher for Science and Modern Foreign Language continually throughout their Year 6.

Discussions included five issues that had been identified from the data collected, with recommendations and strategies to resolve them. The first considered the start of transition for the children, which commenced before the start of the formal process when children visit potential secondary schools. Instead, concerns began for children at the very start of Year 6. Children used their imaginations and interpretation of myth to conceptualise secondary school. There was limited evidence from the case to suggest that teachers recognised children's perceptions and did react to concerns highlighted. However, advice offered included the following suggestions:

- that transition work should be integrated within children's mainstream curriculum at the very start of Year 6.
- children spoke of myth and fears generated from older children and parents. The children appreciated circle time, but felt it started too late within their transition process. They would have liked opportunities to discuss transition at the start of Year 6 in order to alleviate anxieties about secondary school, as stories from peers and family were already emerging.
- starting discussions about transfer when children visit secondary schools during Open Evenings is ideal. These discussions can include preparation for the Open Evening on things to expect, and areas to look for. Post-Open Evening discussion can focus on the positives the Open Evening had to offer.

Although transition development work occurred during lesson time, the sample children did not acknowledge or recognise it. Therefore, transition preparation needed to be more obvious to the children, with dedicated curriculum time. Throughout the study there was little acknowledgement of any transition work being completed. Suggestions offered included:

- generate 'timetabled' transition time. This does not have to be weekly, but could gradually use Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) resources, or transition discussion points generated, and chaired, by the children.

- organise opportunities to teach as a team with a secondary colleague during transition preparation work, as this offers children an experience of different points of view outside the curriculum.
- consider termly 'peer awareness' sessions on different aspects of secondary school life.

Data suggested that the sample children appreciated the drive on consistent routines for the setting and completion of homework. However, the children also recognised that there was little academic homework set post-SATs. As a result, routines became erratic and unstructured. This increased the children's anxiety around transition as they felt 'too relaxed' during the post-SATs learning period, which was more than two months long. Recommendations suggested that teachers needed to:

- maintain urgency of homework and its general organisation.
- emphasise 'academic' and curriculum links to classwork, especially with the development of post-SATs creative curriculum opportunities.
- develop 'link' projects with all destination schools, for completing post-SATs, which children would then take into Year 7. This could also include sharing Year 6 exercise books with their new tutors in Year 7.

Children's anxiety increased prior to the June induction days. Not only was anxiety affected by the thought of attending their new secondary school, but also because they had received very little information about the event. For example, the sample children voiced concerns about not knowing if they had to wear their current school uniform, take a pencil case and note-book, or with whom they would travel on the school bus. The children did not feel primed for the visit, and there was a delay in receipt of information from the destination school. However, Year 6 teachers could have prepared the children using their prior experience of school induction days by:

- developing an information sheet detailing equipment that would be needed, and arrangements regarding uniform, lunch, and what the children would be doing.
- discussing travel arrangements with the children, and ensuring that travel partners were organised for all children who were travelling on the bus.

Finally, the feedback and recommendations covered the wider aspects of transition, including teacher and cluster professional development programmes. Specific points included development of:

- professional development opportunities for Year 6 class teachers to visit the transfer schools. This could include team-teaching, or informal lesson/school observation visits. Such experiences could be used in any transition work with children.
- a transition policy in collaboration with destination schools to detail common aims and objectives, successful outcomes of transition, key dates and procedures, and shared transition curriculum work.

This feedback is similar to that offered to Cases 2 and 3 on completion of the thesis. There were many similarities identified in the issues arising from the student voice and stakeholder interviews; one exception, however, concerned children's travel arrangements to school.

### **7.3.2 Cases 2 and 3 feedback**

As Cases 2 and 3 share the same primary and secondary school leadership team, feedback was to the new Principal of the Academy, though each case was considered individually. Differences in provision between Cases 2 and 3 emerged, as children had different experiences of their destination school. Despite Case 2 being within the same building as the destination school, the children spoke of only having limited experience of Year 7 classroom experience and life. However, the children acknowledged that they felt supported through the transition process through familiarity with the building; developing relationships with 'key' members of staff; and observing older children entering and leaving school. This last point was very important to all the children. By comparison, the Case 3 sample children spoke of increased anxiety. They knew members of the leadership team, some Year 7 teachers, school routines and sanctions of their destination school, but failed to relate them into the context of the new building. What was taken for granted by initial stakeholder interviews manifested itself into transition anxieties that were not alleviated through the transition period. Therefore, Case 3 children and their teachers failed to achieve a cohesive transition programme.

This study identified commonalities between Cases 2 and 3, including consistency in curriculum terminology; developing speaking and listening skills across transition; the implications of SATs; and learning issues with children entering Year 7. Children across Cases 2 and 3 had similar curriculum provision in Year 6 that was developed identifying key objectives and terminology. Therefore, throughout the transition period there should have been consistency in the subjects studied and vocabularies used, however, two issues emerged. The first identified little consistency in key terminology, which caused confusion and frustration in the sample children's learning. The second identified restraints of vocabulary development post-SATs. The recommendations made considered the following curriculum-led initiatives:

- implementation of a creative, topic-led curriculum across the entire transition period, however, timetabling difficulties require resolution.
- continued development of joint planning between primary and secondary phase teachers across Cases 2 and 3.

Analysis of each case study suggested that children were least confident during speaking and listening activities. This was identified in lesson observation activities in both Phases 2 and 3. Children would readily offer contributions to class discussions, but could not follow thoughts through using confident exploratory and reasoning language tools. Challenges associated with speaking and listening experiences were observed when children shared their work with the class. Despite producing excellent work within groups, children had difficulties celebrating their work. For example, in Year 6, during Case 3's lesson observation, the children were expected to share and discuss their PowerPoint presentations with the class. Groups had developed coherent and in-depth analysis, but required teachers to structure children's responses to the class. During Phase 3, children failed to share their drama performances with the class despite the teacher structuring responses. Recommendations considered:

- children having regular, planned 'shared' time to present successful class work and contribute to others. This strategy could be used across all curriculum areas and throughout the transition period.
- the introduction of regular 'big writes' across curriculum areas. (A 'big write' is an exercise in which children are given time to prepare a written or speaking

assignment to present the following day. Therefore, big writes focus on writing about curriculum topics.) This would improve literacy across subject areas, assess knowledge gained, and give children opportunities to share and present written work with class members.

The most complex issue for Cases 2 and 3 was the amount of curriculum time used for preparation for SATs. The sample children reported that SATs preparation continually impinged on other subjects. Indeed, for a large proportion of the academic year, SATs-focused lessons occurred in both the morning and the afternoon, meaning that children did not have access to lessons other than literacy and numeracy. This was due to the perceived pressure to improve the standing of the school. However, this curriculum diminishment had consequences for the children's learning post-transfer, as they then needed to catch up on other subjects, as well as develop the 'new' skills for independent learning required for examination success at Key Stage 4. The recommendations did not offer solutions, but highlighted the negativity of SATs that was expressed through the sample children's experience and frustration. Perhaps the only recommendation that could be made would be to remove SATs from the primary school curriculum, which might be suggested to the government at a suitable juncture.

The final discussion focused on teachers' expectations during the transfer period, and considered teacher preparation for transfer – in which concerns of inconsistent preparation between Cases 2 and 3 were highlighted – and also differences between teaching methods in Years 6 and 7. Teachers continually based preparation on memories and informal observations, rather than on relevant experience of secondary school. There seemed inconsistencies of provision between primary and secondary provision that were brought about by external pressures facing all-through schooling. In addition, the discussion highlighted differences between primary and secondary teaching styles with the possibility that secondary teachers did not recognise the provision offered at primary level. This was exemplified in interviews with the Senior Leadership Team stating that there were 'vast' differences in the quality of presentation in children's exercise books. Cases 2 and 3 have already begun to tackle this issue through Year 6 children taking their exercise books into Year 7. Further recommendations suggested:

- increasing team-teaching experiences between primary and secondary teachers.
- increasing joint planning opportunities for primary and secondary teachers for foundation subjects.

- replicating Case 2's curriculum opportunities and experiences of secondary resourcing to Case 3.
- including Year 6 and 7 teachers in a whole-school evaluation of transition policies and procedures.

### **7.3.3 Recommendations for the wider implications of transition**

Research has yet to solve issues associated with the continuity of learning and language with transition from primary to secondary education. Previous research focused on effective processes and procedures for children's transfer, but seemed to neglect a child's learning journey through the transition period. However, this study explored three distinctive cases in order to understand the effects of transition more fully. The unique organisation of Case 2 might have been expected to have provided an excellent structure for a seamless transfer process, but this study highlighted transition issues within all three cases. Some problems were case-dependent and were detailed in individual feedback and recommendations. Some were common issues across all three cases, which suggests that recommendations need to move away from policies and procedures to focus more on imaginative strategies to ensure children can adapt confidently to their secondary environment. This research identifies three approaches for improving child learning systems within the transfer period.

The first strategy identifies models of continuing professional development for teachers of Years 6 and 7. Despite conclusions drawn from the ORACLE research (Galton *et al*, 1999b), which clearly stated that there was a lack of training opportunities on transition for teachers, the situation has not improved, with each case study recognising that there is still insufficient training at national and local levels. Training is not required to replicate the process and procedural elements of transition, but clearly needs to reflect commonalities associated with a child's continuous learning. This study suggests improving the continuity of learning by immersing secondary school teachers in primary practice, and *vice versa*. This could be achieved by:

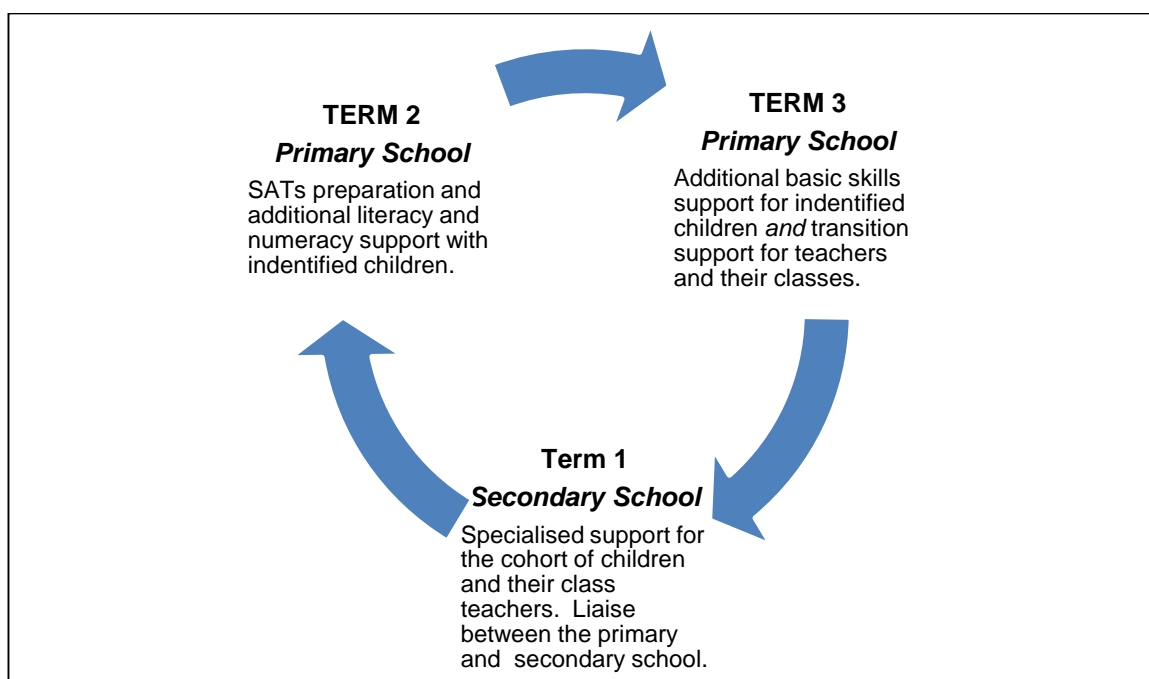
- developing formal and informal observational visits between primary and destination schools. These would equip Year 6 teachers with relevant skills, knowledge and understanding of secondary practices, and would improve transition preparation work for their classes by ensuring that it relates to first-hand experience. In addition, visits by Year 7 teachers would improve consistency between primary and secondary classroom practices. Initial anxiety for children would be removed by identification of similarities between classroom- and learning-routines post-transfer. Therefore, secondary practice would not start by considering children as 'blank canvasses' (Hargreaves and Galton, 2002), but would build on existing knowledge gained by observational experience.
- identifying team-teaching opportunities for primary and secondary teachers. Potentially, observations could be developed in core and foundation subject areas. Programmes arranged in all partnership schools would allow for opportunities to disseminate good practice and develop common planning techniques. In Year 6 children would experience secondary teachers. Rolling the programme out into the children's post-transfer year would allow them to revisit experiences provided by their Year 6 teachers. Therefore, team-teaching opportunities would enrich the notion of partnership and provide a seamless transition experience.
- developing regular teacher-led workshops for teachers working within the transition period. These would explore curriculum content, effective pedagogies and teacher assessment. It is important that workshops are not 'secondary-led' and all have the opportunity to share good learning practice. Workshops could detail assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3; curriculum planning and mapping between partnership schools; offer 'big writes' to Years 6 and 7 and standardise assessment levels; develop effective teaching strategies through questioning, feedback and discussion-led opportunities; and celebrate children's work through effective display.
- this study found that Year 6 children feel safe and familiar in their primary class, but Year 7 introduces different behaviours and ethos from other pupils, as much as their teachers. Therefore, transition should, where possible, accommodate children moving as an existing cohort into their secondary setting. Keeping the Year 6 class together in a single tutor group would ease the transfer process. Once the children feel comfortable in the new routine, more varied groupings could be introduced.



The second strategy identifies children as learners within the transition period. Each case study identified differences in learning opportunities for children, in particular, differences in expectations of teachers that affect continuous learning. Differences that existed between language demands in the children's primary and destination schools were recognised as challenges pre- and post-transfer. The demands included differing subject terminology, and teachers consciously increasing demands by using elevated language to define simple facts. The resulting recommendations identify learning progression that gradually increases learning challenge, within the framework of a progressive curriculum.

- Partnership schools need to map and share curriculum content with common terminology used to define key concepts. This will ensure that any repetition builds on previous learning experiences, and that keywords are used consistently.
- This research has identified children as active participators in developing independent learning within ecological meso- and micro-layers. Therefore, children continually need to rehearse interaction and dialogue in order to remain sustainable and confident learners. The sample children identified a perceived 'down-time' prior to transfer in which learning routines relaxed. This increased anxiety, as children were concerned that they would not retain the knowledge they had learnt in the unfamiliar demands of secondary school. Therefore, to sustain learning and language recognition, it is essential to maintain momentum post-SATs. Children requested continued new learning experiences that were planned in detail and did not detract from existing routines.
- In order to maintain consistency and familiarity during the actual transfer process, primary and partnership schools should appoint a teaching assistant dedicated to transition. The teaching assistant would be funded by both institutions and would follow a cohort of children throughout the transition period. The person would start working with Year 6 during term 2 to help support children through SATs and transition development work in term 3. The teaching assistant would then transfer with the cohort to the destination school for the first term of the cohort's Year 7. Figure 7.1 conceptualises the role and purpose of this model. The transition teaching assistant would ensure effective transfer of information by providing continuity of information about transferring children; consult within curriculum areas on topics and terminology used; and liaise between the primary and destination

school. As discussed earlier, keeping the primary class together should allow transition teaching assistants to be more effective.



**Figure 7.1:** Transition teaching assistant model

Finally, it is essential that primary and destination schools recognise the quality of children's work and the quality of their transition programme to secondary school. This does not require continual redrafting of transition policies and procedures, but assessment of the quality of programmes offered is required. The recommendations offered were developed from the consistencies of learning contained within the meso-level of classroom experience, to the macro-level of whole school self-review frameworks.

- Each case study reflects on the child's need to experience similarities and differences in school life pre- and post-transfer. One tool that can be deployed is to display successful primary school work in subject-specific secondary school classrooms. This will enable the children to relate continuous learning from their primary school to their secondary school. It would allow familiarity of the 'family unit' offered by the primary school setting by evoking learning memories that could enhance a child's future learning in their new context
- Induction days would allow children to share their exercise books with their new secondary school tutor. The tutor could then develop a portfolio of successful work

completed at primary school, which the child could share with subject teachers. Viewing the quality of exercise books and assessment would increase prior learning expectations for secondary teachers. Exercise books provide 'first-hand' evidence of work developed in the child's primary school.

- Finally, it is essential to develop effective whole-school transition evaluation procedures. These would include: continual evaluation of practice across primary and partnership schools; evaluation of reflections offered by children, caregivers and teachers; and provoke discussion between primary and destination schools.

#### **7.4 Reflections on the research journey**

This research has taken me on a development journey from a full-time professional role within a school's senior leadership team to a full-time PhD student and researcher. It was my own 'transition' from teacher to researcher that formed the most significant part of my own learning journey. My journey started in the outer of circles of Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 allowing me to look from the inside of a learning establishment assessing children's transition through the eyes of a teacher who was significantly contributing to Year 6 and Year 7 children's education. The case studies were the pivotal point of the research that allowed me to scrutinise the school's procedures and learning from the outside by developing a comparative analysis of three discrete and unique transition models. Therefore, during the first step I focused on children's transition from the 'outside in'. This was a significant change in my research perspective. The second step changed my role as a teacher of children, to a researcher of children. The wealth of professional experience I had previously gained within school contexts supported the development of trust between me and the sample children and provoked discussions that documented their anxieties, excitement and journey through their transition period. Each child had a voice and a right to be heard. The final step brought me out of the busyness of classroom life and allowed time to reflect on, and analyse, the children's experience. For each step I made it was essential that I adapted to new chapters within my life. I did this research work in order to make a significant contribution to young people's lives and their learning journeys.

The strength of this study is that it allowed children to focus on their transfer to secondary school. It allowed them time for reflection, and opportunities to discuss anxieties outside the formalities of classroom life. The sample children spoke openly of their learning

progression; learning developments offered by the class teachers; concerns associated with SATs; and influence of family and teachers on their transition journey. Their accounts were validated when teachers allowed me to visit their classrooms to observe learning, and use of language to support learning. Previous professional relationships with the children did not evoke concerns at each visit. Instead, children considered my visits to be a natural occurrence and enjoyed sharing their successes and progression. Further validation allowed comparisons between formal and informal learning opportunities. The sample children approached their independent learning activities with enthusiasm. Observations of this activity suggested that children enjoyed creative aspects of learning and had the necessary skills to develop learning within groups. In addition, further conversations emerged evaluating their transfer experience and the roles of teachers within this. On reflection, the children were a joy to work with, offering honesty and maturity in all their contributions.

However, despite the positive acknowledgements of contributions and co-operation of participants within the study, data collection could have been improved by subtle changes to the design and purpose of some activities. Firstly, the initial study design sought the agreement of each case's primary and destination school. Unfortunately, Case 1's destination school pulled out of the study later due to a change in the circumstances of the school.

- Case 1 sample children were not observed in their secondary context and data collection activities were re-accommodated in the primary school hall. This did not influence data collected from phase student voice activities or independent learning activity.
- For comparative purposes a further lesson was observed in Case 2 contributing to discussion of similarities and differences between a Year 7 secondary 'home' lesson for children who required further intervention to access mainstream secondary structures, and a drama lesson that considered children's abilities in speaking and listening.
- In addition, Case 1 was not represented in secondary stakeholder interviews. As a result, only the children's viewpoints were analysed in Phase 3. This did not restrict the discussions presented, and reinforced the concept of child-focused research.

The initial research design also involved collecting views from the sample children's caregivers. This would have extended the perspective on each case's transition model. Views were collected from one caregiver in Case 1 who offered to be interviewed. This enriched the Case 1 perspective on transition, and responses were used in the case study report. It is possible that collating views from caregivers may have jeopardised the notion of a child-focused study, although it is also possible that they added a further dimension to the study by enriching data collection on specific issues raised by the children. If I were to repeat the study, caregivers' views would be represented to compare against findings of this study and data collected from other relevant stakeholders.

## **7.5 Final conclusion**

By answering the initial research questions, this study has reignited the on-going discussion of transition. This study has developed comparisons between three distinct transition models that allowed unique opportunities for children to voice their perspectives, feelings and observations in a changing learning structure that influences the development of their own learning journey. To continue the debate further, a future researcher may want to consider a longitudinal aspect of the study by studying the sample children throughout their secondary and post-compulsory school careers. Research may focus on similarities and differences offered by transitions between Key Stages. After all, transition within children's learning education does not stop when they enter Year 7. In addition, this study could be developed further by investigating and understanding differences in language demands across all Key Stages and how these change teacher and child expectations of learning. Finally, researchers may want to consider the long-term effects of SATs on a child's progress in Key Stage 4, and their subsequent achievement in GCSE English and mathematics.

Transition remains a complex area of research. This study has made a difference to children's transition within the three cases exemplified here. Data from recommendations made has suggested improvements to their transition programme in all three cases. Further research will be able to evaluate the impact of this. However, it is important to note that transition research still has a long way to go to ensure sustainable, confident and seamless learning as children transfer from primary to secondary education.

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## Lectures

Young, M. (2011) *Knowledge and Experience*, Bath University, 27/01/2011

## **Appendices Index**

- Appendix 1:** Demographic analysis of each case
- Appendix 2:** Stakeholder and child voice interview questions
- Appendix 3:** Graphical summaries of the initial analysis
- Appendix 4:** Similarities and differences between independent learning activities and lesson observations in Phases 2 and 3
- Appendix 5:** Starter activities for the child voice interviews



## Appendix 1

### Demographic analysis of each case study

The statistical data are taken from the census (2001) and ACORN (2010) indexes, which provided a demographic profile for each case. These data were collected prior to the start of the research programme and are derived from the postcode index that represents the school's residential profile. The analysis consists of:

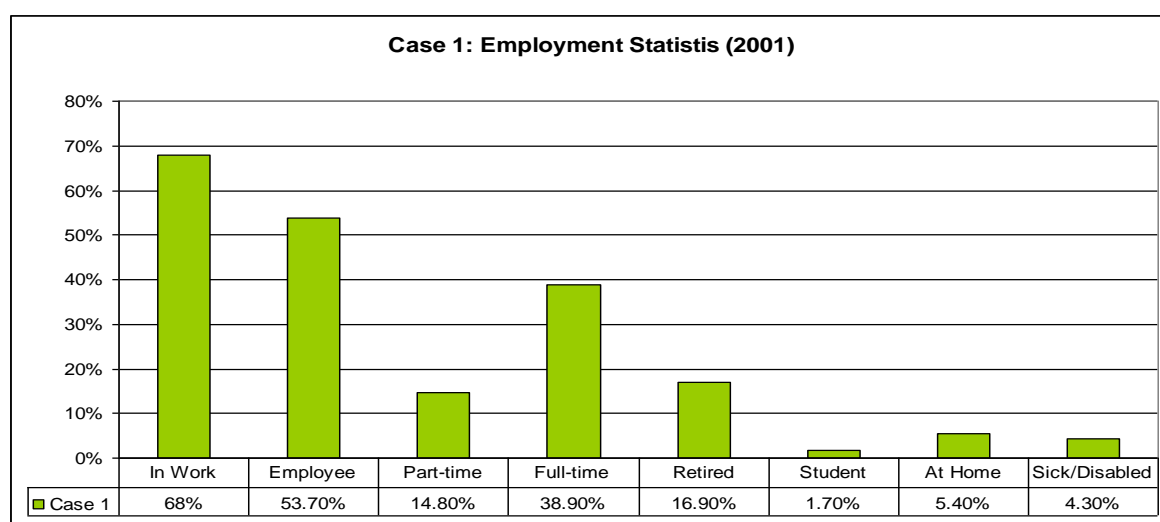
- employment and income;
- life events detailing household;
- qualifications gained.

#### A1.1 Case 1 demographic analysis

Category	Profile
Category 1	Wealthy achievers <b>Group B:</b> Affluent greys <b>Type 7:</b> Old people in detached homes. All privately owned.
Category 5	Hard pressed <b>Group N:</b> Struggling families <b>Type 45:</b> Older people on low incomes. Semi-detached social housing, some privately owned.

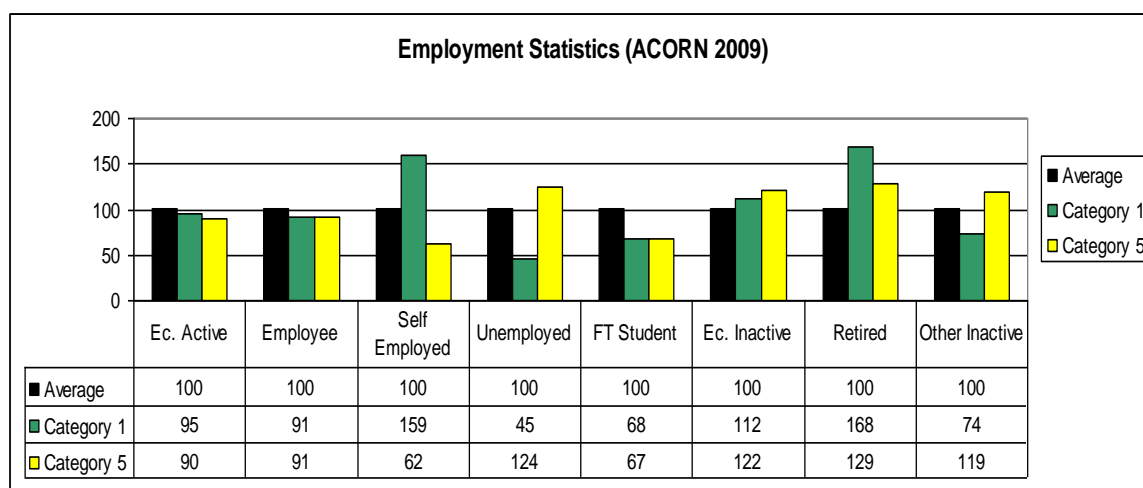
As of 2001, 38.9% of non-school age residents residing in the ward of Case 1 were in full-time employment. A large proportion of these were either in professional or skilled work. More than half of the residents, 53.7%, were in employment, with 14.3% self-employed. With 68% of residents representing the workforce population, and 16.9% retired, there was little unemployment in this small, rural market town. Compared with demographic data generated by ACORN (2010) based on postcode areas for school catchment, there are two deeply contrasting intakes of children. Category 1 residents, deemed wealthy achievers compared to Category 5 residents, who are hard-pressed citizens on low incomes living on a local social-housing estate. The ACORN Index (2010), represented in Graph 1.2, has shown notable differences in the demographics of this area, with an increase in the self-

employed population and retired residents. The area is transforming itself into a commuter town with direct rail links to London. However, there is a distinct increase in unemployment, particularly among Category 5 residents. It is interesting to note that three-fifths of the sample's parents are in professional or skilled labour, with the remainder in local industry and self-employment.



**Graph 1.1:** Employment statistics for Case 1 (Census Data 2001)

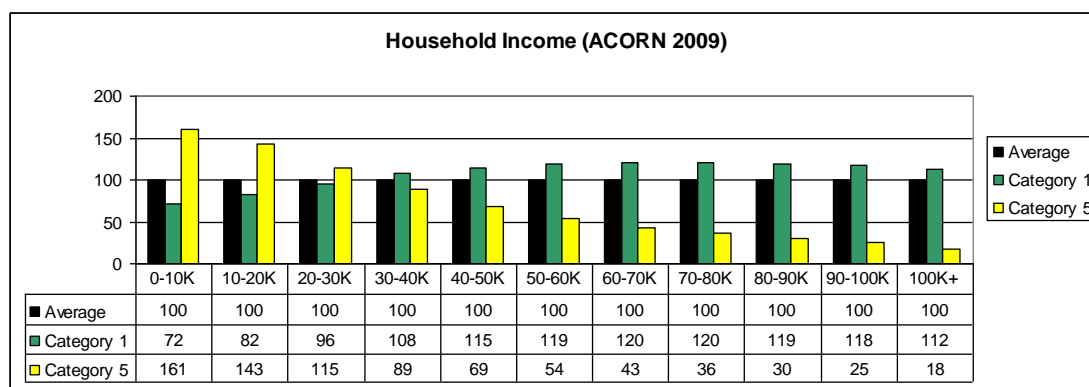
Taking a score of 100 to be average across England, the following graphs represent employment statistics:



**Graph 1.2:** Employment statistics for Case 1 (ACORN 2010)

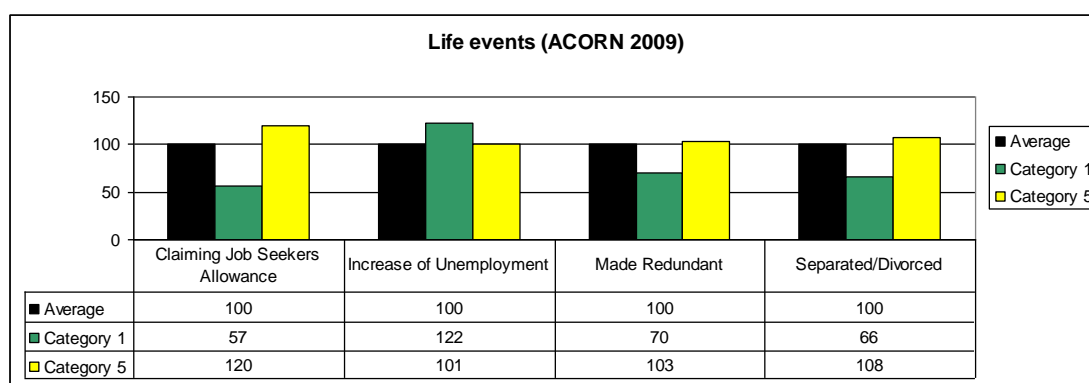
Average household incomes between the categories 1 and 5 contrast each other as shown in Graph 1.3. There is a definite decline in annual salary for Category 5 residents, with

many earning on or below the minimum wage, with income generated through part-time work and social benefits. Category 1 residents provide a contrast with this, with average income above national rates, with the majority of residents earning from £50k to £100k per annum. Again, this reflects the extreme diversity of Case 1 pupil intake.



**Graph 1.3:** Household income (ACORN 2010)

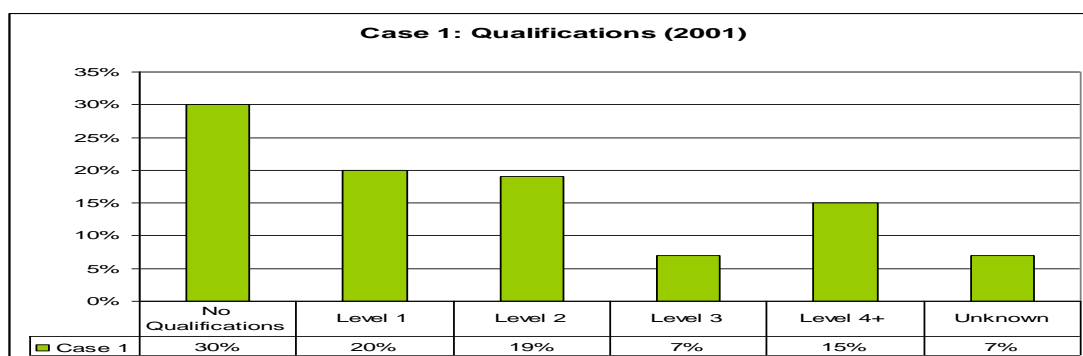
Despite Category 1 residents receiving well above the average annual income, redundancy was also above average during this period, with recession and unemployment affecting their lives. However, the number of residents claiming Job Seeker's Allowance is less than half the national average, and unemployment is notably below the national average. Therefore, residents are either not entitled to claim benefit, or live off savings. By comparison with Category 5, there is a definite increase in families claiming Job Seeker's Allowance and taking redundancy. Graph 1.4 summarises these figures.



**Graph 1.4:** Life events for Case 1 (ACORN 2010)

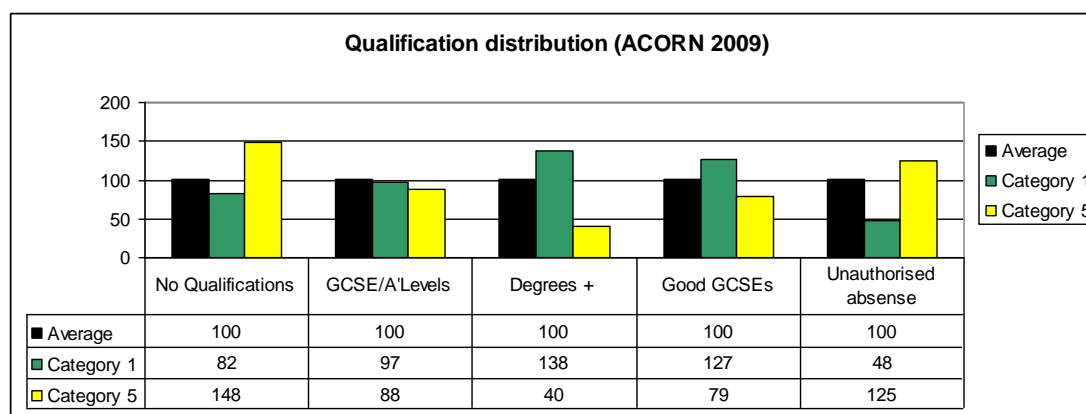
According to the 2001 census, 70% of the economically-active population have formal qualifications ranging from Level 1 to Level 8. Thirty-nine per cent have Level 1 and 2 qualifications, with 15% having attended degree-related courses. It is interesting to note that the transfer school currently attains 67% A\*-C (including English and Mathematics).

One of the sample children has a mother working in Higher Education in a Professorial role. Graph 1.5 highlights the distribution of attainment.



**Graph 1.5:** Qualification statistics for Case 1 (2001)

ACORN (2010) suggests there is a definite contrast in attainment between both categories, with Category 1 receiving above average qualifications for Level 2 and Level 4+ awards. As discussed previously, this supports the data for employment and household incomes, with the view that higher education will encourage secure professional and skilled employment. Such claims contribute to the view that the lower rate of unauthorised absences from school, seen in this category, helps children to progress further at school. By comparison, Category 5 residents have above average levels of unauthorised absences, and, therefore, have no formal qualifications and below average Level 1+ attainment.



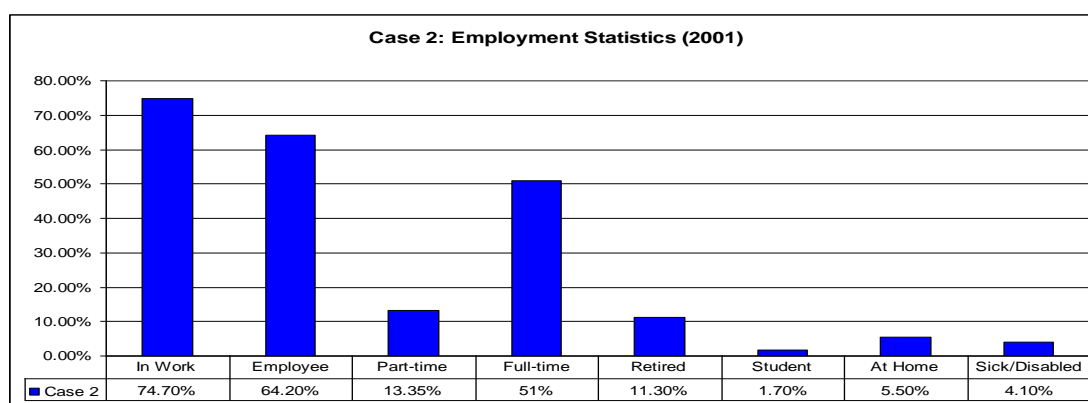
**Graph 1.6:** Qualification distribution for Case 1 (ACORN 2010)

The statistical data provided permitted production of a demographic model of the Case 1 cohort, and signified the breadth of the sample required to ensure exact representation of the school's population. Case 1 sample consists of children ranging from Category 1 to Category 5 with regard to locations, employment opportunities and qualifications.

## A1.2 Case 2

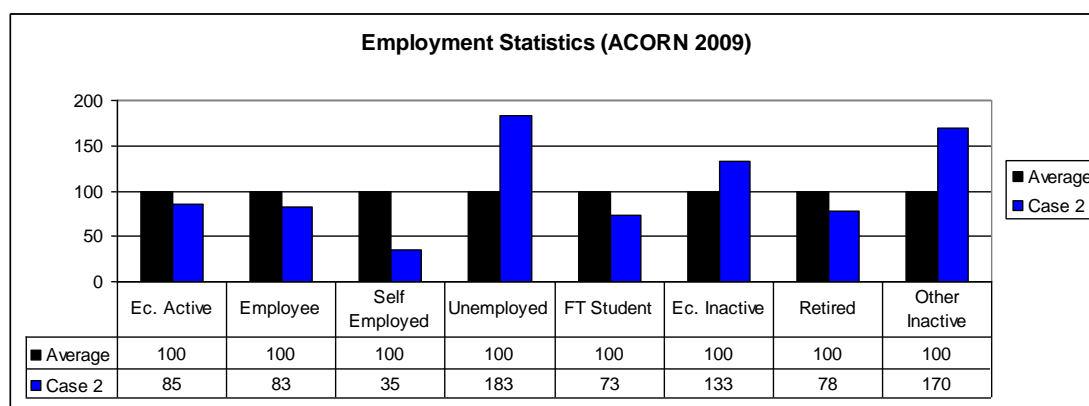
Category	Profile
Category 5	Hard pressed <b>Group N:</b> Struggling families <b>Type 48:</b> Low income, high unemployment and single parents

With 74.70% of the work-age population in work, the ward of Case 2 has more people in employment than the other two. However, unlike Case 1, the Census index (2001) identifies this work as mainly manual or unskilled, with only 51% in full-time employment. The workforce consists of industrial workers, with previous generations moving from East London to the prosperous railroads of the South. Some postcode areas identify families who have had more than a generation of unemployment and distrust the education system. Only 1.7% of the work-age population are in full-time education.



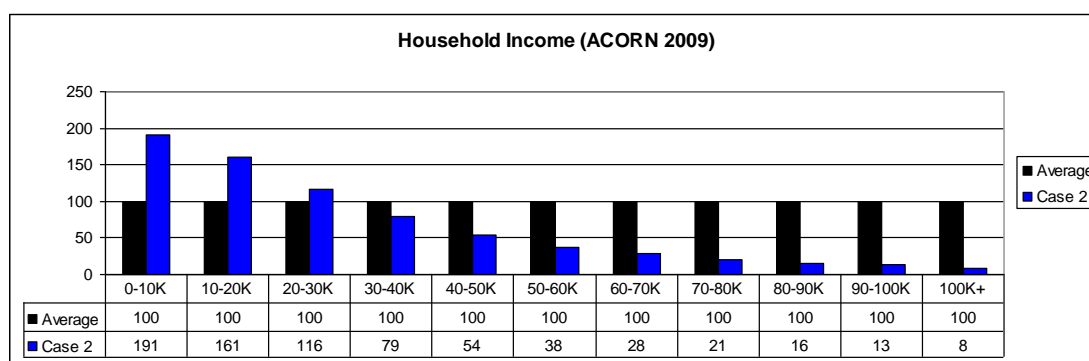
**Graph 1.7:** Employment statistics for Case 2 (Census 2001).

A significant proportion of the Case 2 cohort resides in Category 5 areas, and are classified by ACORN (2010) as hard-pressed, burdened families. Demographic statistics show there is nearly double the national average of unemployment, and that levels of economically-inactive residents are above average. Unlike Case 1, there is a distinct decrease in self-employed work and below average level of employment. It is interesting to note that despite such high unemployment and economically-inactive residents, few are either retired or in full-time education. Graph 1.8 highlights the distribution of employment statistics.



**Graph 1.8:** Employment statistics for Case 2 (ACORN 2010)

Annual household income is significantly below the national average, with nearly double the average number of households earning below minimum wage entitlement. Families earn less than £20K per annum, including social benefit. In the terms of today's society, families live in impoverished conditions, and are unable to secure basic entitlements to secure a healthy upbringing for a family. Graph 1.9 signifies a steep downward trend in income; therefore, sustained education is essential to move families out of the poverty gap to secure good employment rights for its school age population.

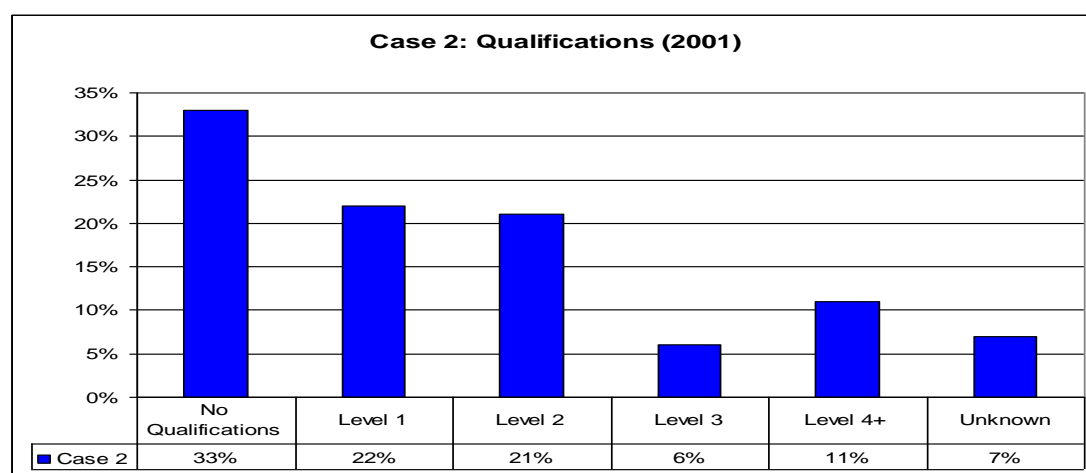


**Graph 1.9:** Annual household income (ACORN 2010)

The rate of unemployment is static, and slightly below the national average. However, more residents claim Job Seeker's Allowance than do in Case 1. Unlike Case 1, figures for claiming Job Seeker's Allowance is in-line with the number of residents currently unemployed, but despite this, families still live below the poverty line. Levels of redundancy and single-parent families continue to rise.

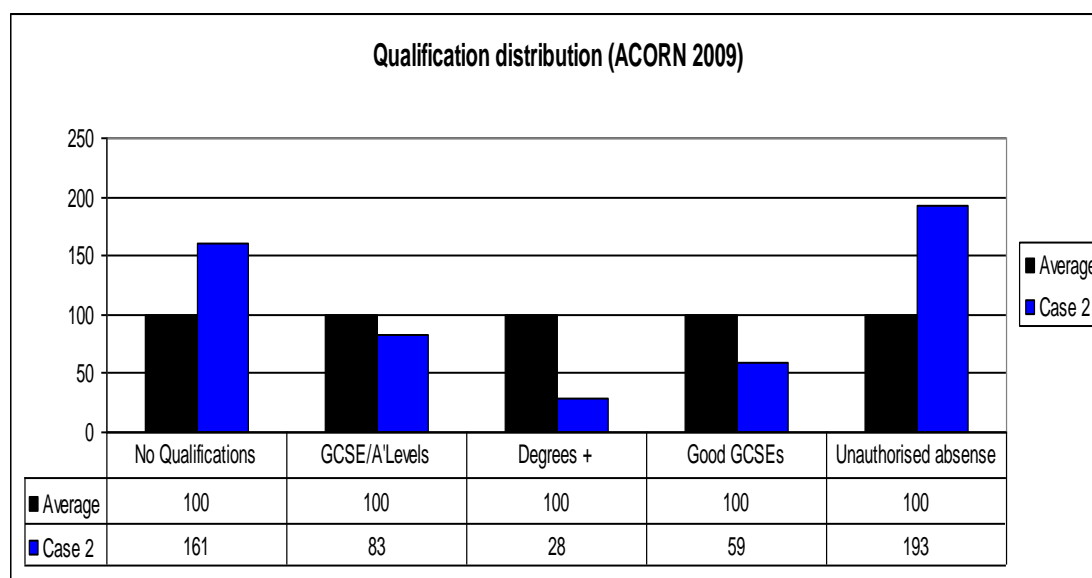
**Graph 1.10:** Life events (ACORN 2010)

Thirty-three per cent of the work-age population have no formal qualifications, with a further 43% attaining Level 1 and 2 qualifications. Eleven per cent have degree equivalents, compared to 15% in Case 1. Case 2 attainment for 2010-11 is 30% A\*-C GCSE (including English and Mathematics), with 64% of its year 11 population gaining 5+ A\*-Cs. This rose further, to 83%, in 2011-2012.



**Graph 1.11:** Qualification statistics for Case 2 (2001)

ACORN (2010) highlights the distrust and lack of confidence that families have in the education system. In order to move out of the spiral of deprivation, children in Case 2 need to secure their entitlement to lifelong learning and join a professional and skilled workforce. Case 2 already celebrates an upward trend of results that will allow children a better future through giving them confidence to pursue higher education. As cohorts go through, this trend will continue to rise with a curriculum designed to promote active learning. An all-through school is essential in this community, as each year all the children leave with formal qualifications that will lead to a career. Graph 1.12 quantifies attainment for past generations and presents a bleak picture of the social environment in which the children live.



**Graph 1.12:** Qualification distribution (ACORN 2010)

Case 2 lacks the diversity that Case 1 offers, as its cohort strives to improve their lives, and their families', lives. Data suggest that children seem trapped in a climate of extreme social deprivation, yet, in the preliminary study, my sample suggests that they are finding confidence in themselves as learners, and have expectations in readiness for their transfer into Year 7.

### A1.3 Case 3

Category	Profile
Category 5	Hard pressed Group O: Burdened families Type 51: Council terraces, very high unemployment with many single parent families.

Case 3 has the largest unemployed work-age population, at 40.2%, with only 38% in full-time employment. The ACORN (2010) index concludes that it has a similar profile to Case 2, with a large majority of the workforce in manual and unskilled roles, on low income, and remains in the bottom 5% of the National Deprivation Index. Many families have at least one generation who have never worked, suggesting poor basic skills and a lack of

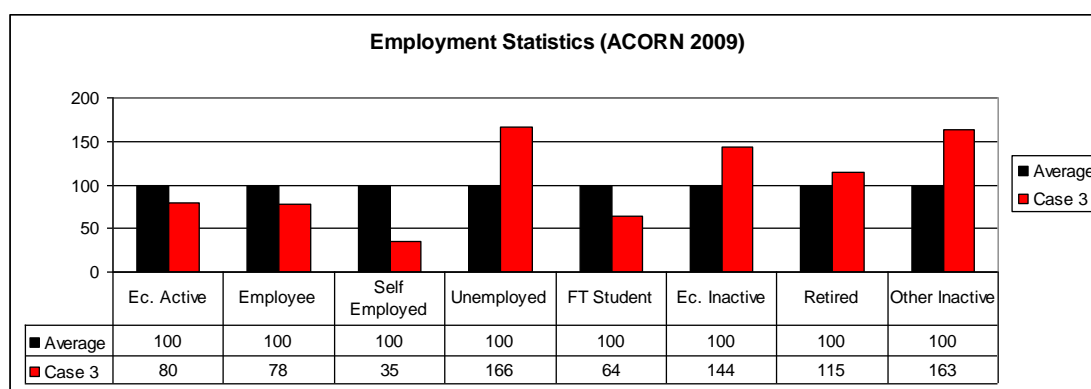


confidence in the availability of work. Four-fifths of the sample have parents that are either unemployed or in part-time manual work.



**Graph 1.14:** Employment statistics for Case 3 (2001)

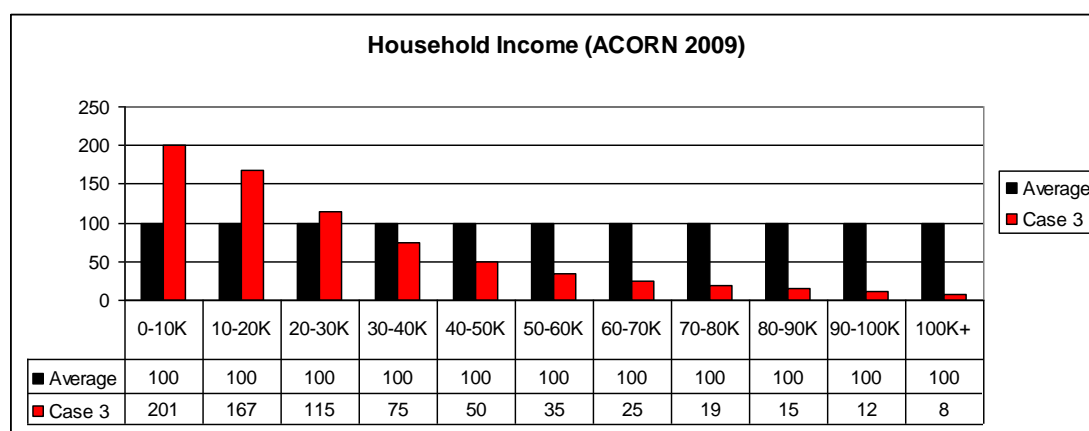
ACORN (2010) classifies Case 3 as hard-pressed struggling families on low incomes and with high unemployment. The profile of employment statistics is similar to that of Case 2, with slightly fewer families being unemployed, and an above average level of retired residents. The graph suggests that workers are in unskilled employment, with a significant proportion of Case 3 that is below the national average being self-employed. There is more than twice the number of economically-inactive residents as economically-active residents.



**Graph 1.15:** Employment statistics (ACORN 2010)

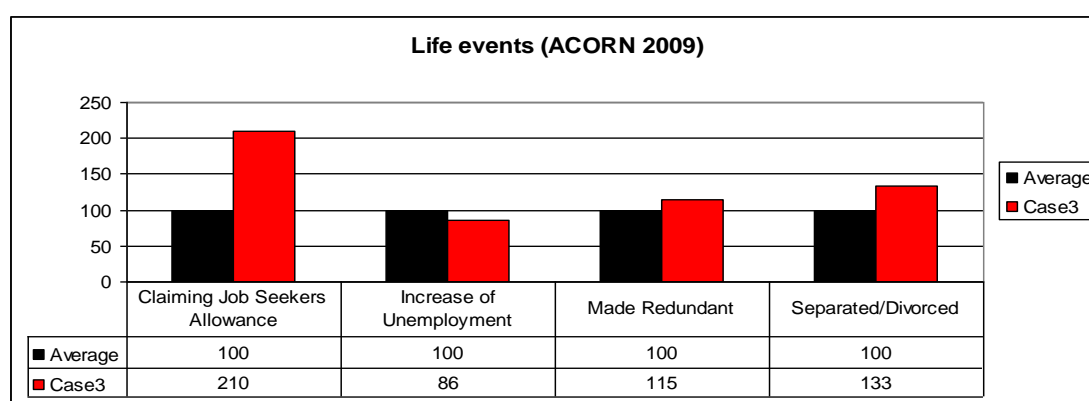
More than twice the number of Case 3 families live below the national average poverty line in England with an average household income of less that £10K per annum. As with Case 2, there is a clear reduction in income, with a similar graphical distribution of wealth. Graph 1.15 shows that there are significantly fewer household incomes beyond £30k per annum than the national average would expect. Again, for a large proportion of the Case 3 cohort,

the children come from pockets of extreme social deprivation, so school is not only a safe haven for them, but also a means of future escape from the spiral of deprivation.



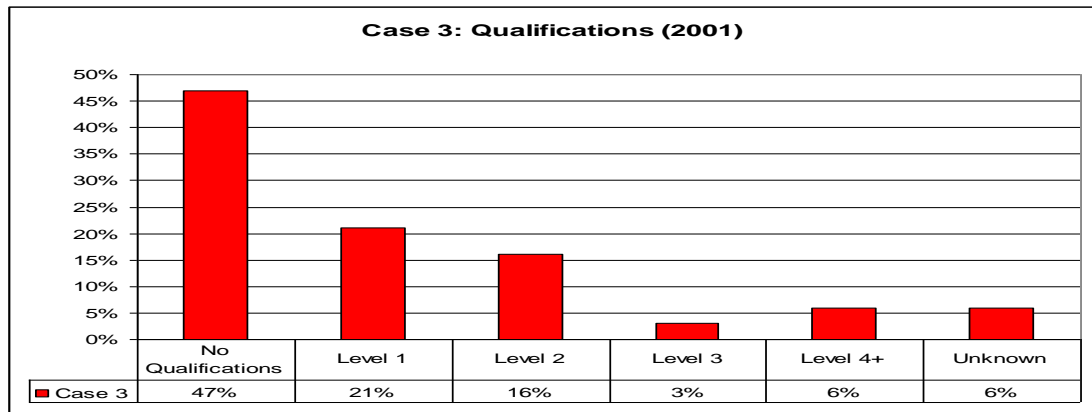
**Graph 1.16:** Household income (ACORN 2010)

Unemployment remains inconsistent, as there is a slower increase of redundancy. However, the number of families claiming Job Seeker's Allowance is more than double the national average. Despite such staggering statistics, divorce and separation figures fall between those of Case 1 (Category 5) and Case 2.



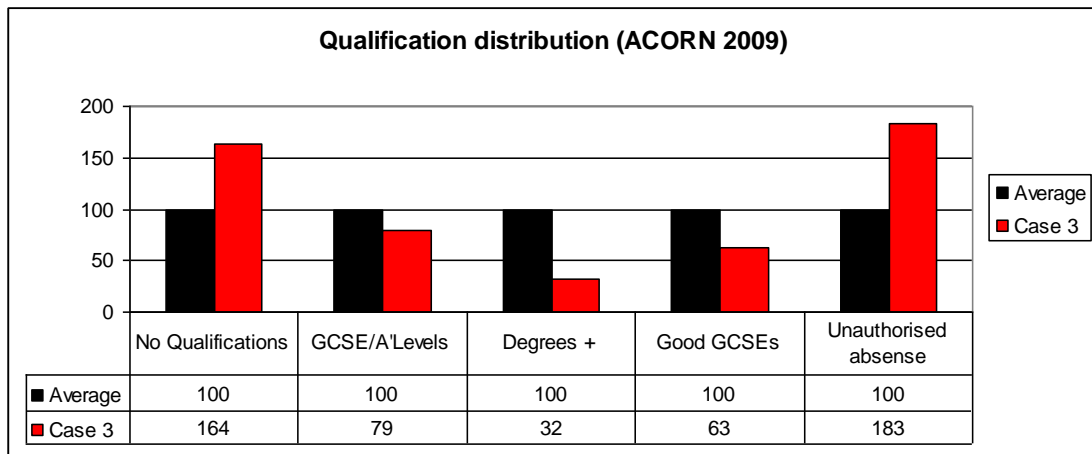
**Graph 1.17:** Life events (ACORN 2010)

Qualification profiles compliment employment statistics with 53% of the work-age population having no qualifications, 37% with either Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications and only 6% awarded a degree or its equivalent. These figures are notably lower than for Cases 1 and 2. Last academic year, Year 6 children achieved national standards in English and Mathematics.



**Graph 1.18:** Qualification statistics for Case 3 (2001)

The distribution of qualifications according to ACORN (2010) has a very similar profile to that of Case 2, with well above average figures for families with no qualifications and high levels of unauthorised absence from school. The discussion is identical to that presented for Case 2.



**Graph 1.19:** Qualification distribution (ACORN 2010)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholders and child voice interview questions**

#### **A2.1 Phase 1: Preliminary investigation**

The questions for the preliminary investigation are based on the framework provided by Evangelou *et al* (2008).

#### **A1.1.2 Teacher interview framework**

##### **Process and procedures**

1. Can you outline the School's transition programme?
2. Have there been any recent changes on transfer and transition at National, Local Authority and School level?
3. What training has been offered and received at Local Authority and School level?
4. What events do schools offer other than taster days, tours around the school and Open Evenings?

##### **Social stability for the child**

1. What support does your school offer parents/carers in making the right choices for secondary school?
2. In your opinion, is there effective linkage between your school and the transfer schools? How do you know?
3. What support is in place for vulnerable children and their families including additional educational needs and Ethnic Minority children?
4. What data are transferred? How reliable is the actual transfer of data mechanism?

##### **Continuity of provision (pedagogy, curricula and assessment)**

1. How do you ensure continuity of curriculum?
2. How do you ensure continuity of relevant terminology in all curriculum areas?
3. What are the commonalities and differences between a primary and secondary classroom?
4. How do you ensure continuity of effective pedagogy and practice to ensure a smooth transition process?

##### **Evaluation of provision**

1. How do you evaluate your transition programme with staff, parents and children?
2. What outcomes of the transition programme are important to you?
3. How do you think transition will change in the future?

### **A2.1.2 Child voice interview**

#### **Evaluation of Year 6**

1. What is the best thing about being in Year 6?
2. How does your teacher make learning fun?

#### **Social stability**

1. What most excites you about starting secondary school?
2. What are you most nervous about starting secondary school?
3. What work, or visits, have you done to start preparing yourself for Year 7?
4. How is your teacher preparing you for Year 7?

#### **Continuity of provision**

- Can you describe what your new teachers will be like in Year 7?
- Do you think your teachers will talk differently to you in Year 7? How?
- What subjects do you learn in Year 6?
- What new subjects are you going to learn in Year 7?
- Do you think you will learn better by being in a few classrooms, or many?

#### **Evaluation**

- What advice would you offer to a Year 5 child when they start Year 6?

### **A.2.2 Phase 2**

These questions formed part of the child voice activity as the children approached the end of their Year 6. Questions were derived from research findings of the preliminary investigation.

#### **Reflection on Year 6**

1. What have been the highlights of your Year 6?
2. Besides friendships, what will you miss most about Year 6?
3. How were SATs?
4. Do you think the teaching changed before SATs and after SATs?
5. What were the demands of SATs?

### **Reflection of learning in Year 6**

1. What learning skills have you developed during Year 6?
2. Has the language used by your teacher got progressively more demanding during Year 6?
3. What gets in the way of your learning?
4. How will you ensure the skills taught in Year 6 will be used in Year 7?
5. What does confidence mean? Do you feel confident in your learning?

### **Looking forward to Year 7**

1. Do you feel ready for Year 7?
2. How has your teacher prepared you for Year 7?
3. What are you looking forward to in Year 7?
4. What is your secondary school like? How do you know?
5. What advice would you offer to Year 5 for their Year 6?

## **A3.1 Phase 3**

The child voice questions were structured from the findings of Phase 2. In addition, a parent volunteered to be interviewed and the questions asked form part of this section within the appendix.

### **A3.1.1 Child voice activity**

#### **Introduction to Year 7**

1. How is Year 7 going? What are the best things about being in Year 7?
2. How is Year 7 different to Year 6? Do the teachers treat you differently?
3. Has there been anything that you learnt in Year 6 repeated in Year 7? Can you give examples?
4. In Year 7, what helps you with your learning? What frustrates you with your learning?
5. Last academic year you talked of being the eldest in your 'primary' school, do you feel any different now that you are the youngest?

#### **The language of Year 7**

1. Is the vocabulary that you learnt in Year 6 being used in Year 7? For example, do teachers use the same words in science when giving instructions – equipment and apparatus?
2. Have you completed any tests? If so, was the language similar to that used in your SATs papers last May? How?
3. Do you think your SATs prepared you for Year 7? How?

4. Do teachers talk to you differently now that you are in Year 7? Would you say they use a wider range or narrower range of vocabulary than your Year 6 teachers?  
Can you give an example?
5. How is the homework different to what you were set in Year 6?

### **Evaluation of transition programme**

1. Did your primary school prepare you for your Year 7? Did you feel settled on your very first day?
2. How could your Year 6 teachers prepare you better for Year 7?
3. Did you enjoy your summer holidays? How did the thought of secondary school affect your holiday?
4. If you were in charge of your school's transition programme, how would you change it?
5. Last June you gave advice for your Year 6 teachers. Now that you are in Year 7, what advice would you give to your Year 6 teacher?

### **A3.1.2 Parent interview**

#### **Choice of school**

1. What literature informed your choice of secondary school?
2. What support was offered to you to make an informed choice for your child's secondary school?
3. What support was offered by your child's primary school? Did you find this useful in making the decision?
4. How did the secondary school help to support to your decision?

#### **Transition process**

1. What were your expectations for your child's transition?
2. Did the primary and secondary meet these expectations? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Did you talk to your child about moving to secondary school? Can you give some examples about what you talked about in relation to changing schools?
4. How has your child settled into secondary school life? How do you know?

#### **Differences between primary and secondary education**

1. What do you perceive as the main differences between your child's primary and secondary education?
2. What new demands are placed on your child now that he/she is in secondary school?
3. Is there a distinct difference between language used from his/her primary education to secondary? Can you give examples?
4. How do the language demands (define language demand) of primary school, secondary school and home compare?

Do you feel ready to support your child through secondary school?

## **Appendix 3**

### **Graphical summaries of the initial analysis**

#### **Preliminary investigation analysis**

Stakeholder comparative initial analysis

Child voice initial analysis

Comparison of stakeholder interviews and child voice initial analysis



## Stakeholder interviews

### Comparative analysis: Support and understanding through the transition process (Preliminary investigation)

	Case 1		Case 2				Case 3	
	SLT	T 1 & 2	SLT 1	SLT 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2
Child-centred statements	10 (8.26%)	10 (14.08%)	4 (3.93%)	22 (11.40%)	6 (10.17%)	9 (9.80%)	0 (0.00%)	13 (8.18%)
Child-centred statements (negative)	1 (0.83%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (3.39%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (1.26%)
Support systems for children	7 (5.78%)	0 (0.00%)	15 (14.70%)	7 (3.63%)	2 (3.39%)	4 (3.92%)	7 (6.54%)	14 (8.80%)
Support systems for children (negative)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.93%)	3 (1.89%)
Family support systems	5 (4.13%)	7 (9.86%)	20 (19.61%)	12 (6.22%)	6 (10.17%)	6 (5.88%)	8 (7.48%)	3 (1.89%)
Family support systems (negative)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.41%)	2 (1.96%)	2 (1.04%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (5.03%)
Familiarity with partnership school	4 (3.30%)	4 (5.63)	11 (10.78%)	15 (7.77%)	7 (11.86%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (1.89%)
Unfamiliarity with partnership school	1 (0.83%)	3 (4.22%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (5.08%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.93%)	9 (5.66%)
Myth	2 (1.65%)	1 (1.41%)	1 (0.98%)	4 (2.07%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (1.96%)	3 (2.80%)	0 (0.00%)

### Comparative analysis: Transition, process and procedures

	Case 1		Case 2				Case 3	
	SLT	T 1 & 2	SLT 1	SLT 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2
Partnerships with school clusters	7 (5.78%)	5 (7.04%)	14 (13.08%)	15 (7.77%)	3 (7.69%)	3 (2.94%)	12 (11.21%)	2 (1.26%)
Issues with partnership clusters	7 (5.78%)	6 (8.45%)	1 (0.98%)	3 (1.55%)	2 (3.39%)	2 (1.96%)	6 (5.61%)	10 (6.29%)
Processes of transition	10 (8.26%)	3 (4.22%)	15 (14.70%)	19 (9.84%)	1 (1.69%)	1 (0.98%)	4 (3.74%)	7 (4.40%)
Issues with processes of transition	5 (4.13%)	1 (1.41%)	3 (2.80%)	3 (1.55%)	8 (13.56%)	8 (7.84%)	8 (7.48%)	9 (5.66%)
Transfer of data and child information	6 (3.30%)	1 (1.41%)	4 (3.93%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.93%)	5 (3.14%)
Issues with transfer of data	13 (10.74%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (3.39%)	2 (1.96%)	9 (8.41%)	0 (0.00%)
Post-transfer procedures	4 (3.30%)	6 (8.45%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (4.66%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (6.54%)	3 (1.89%)
Issues with post-transfer procedures	3 (2.48%)	1 (1.41%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.52%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (4.67%)	2 (1.26%)

### Comparative analysis: Impact of transition

	Case 1			Case 2			Case 3	
	SLT	T 1 & 2	SLT 1	SLT 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2
Continuity and progression of language	7 (5.78%)	11 (15.49%)	2 (1.96%)	10 (5.18%)	1 (1.69%)	4 (3.92%)	3 (2.80%)	9 (5.66%)
Issues with language at transition	19 (15.70%)	3 (4.22%)	14 (9.52%)	15 (7.77%)	3 (7.69%)	22 (21.57%)	8 (7.48%)	24 (15.09%)
Continuity of provision	1 (0.83%)	8 (11.27%)	24 (16.33%)	29 (14.65%)	7 (11.86%)	14 (13.72%)	23 (21.49%)	12 (7.55%)
Discontinuity of provision	5 (4.13%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (2.04%)	9 (4.66%)	4 (6.78%)	6 (5.88%)	14 (13.08%)	9 (5.66%)
Statutory Assessment Tests	3 (2.48%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (2.04%)	4 (2.07%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.93%)	2 (1.26%)
Impact of Statutory Assessment Tests	1 (0.83%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.98%)	14 (7.25%)	2 (3.39%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (1.87%)	11 (6.92%)

### Comparative analysis: Evaluating the transition process

	Case 1			Case 2			Case 3	
	SLT	T 1 & 2	SLT 1	SLT 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2
Positive statements on transfer	57 (47.11%)	56 (78.87%)	122 (82.99%)	142 (73.57%)	20 (33.90%)	76 (75.51%)	50 (46.73%)	84 (52.83%)
Statements highlighting issues on transfer	64 (52.89%)	15 (21.13%)	25 (17.01%)	51 (26.42%)	39 (66.10%)	26 (25.49%)	57 (53.27%)	75 (47.17%)

**Comparative analysis:** Key categories arising from staff interviews

	Case 1			Case 2			Case 3	
	SLT	T 1 & 2	SLT 1	SLT 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2
Positive statements on transfer	Child Centred 10 (8.26%) Process 10 (8.26%)	Language 11 (15.49%)	Continuity 24 (16.33%)	Continuity 29 (14.65%)	Continuity 14 (11.86%)	Continuity 7 (11.86%) Familiarity 7 (11.86%)	Continuity 23 (21.49%)	Child Support 14 (8.80%)
Statements highlighting issues on transfer	Language 19 (15.70%)	School Partnership 6 (7.04%)	Language 14 (9.52%)	Language 15 (7.77%) SATs 14 (7.25%)	Process 8 (13.56%)	Language 22 (21.57%)	Discontinuity 14 (13.08%)	Language 24 (15.09%)

**Comparative analysis:** Collective distribution of key negative categories from staff interviews

	Collected counted statements (out of 959 recorded)	% of statements recorded
Issues with language continuity at transition	108	11.26%
Discontinuity of provision	50	5.21%
Issues with processes of transition	44	4.59%
Issues with partnership clusters	37	3.85%
Impact of Statutory Assessment Tests	31	3.23%
Issues with data transfer	26	2.71%
Unfamiliarity of transfer school	17	1.77%
Support systems for family (-)	13	1.35%
Myth	13	1.35%
Issues with post transfer procedures	12	1.25%
Child centred statements (-)	5	0.52%
Support systems for children (-)	4	0.42%

## Preliminary investigation: Comparative student voice analysis

### Impact of transition on Year 6

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Academic Year 6 highlights	36 (15.79%)	33 (29.73%)	27 (16.26%)
Academic Year 6 issues	11 (4.82%)	5 (4.50%)	15 (9.04%)
Expectations of Year 7	20 (8.77%)	6 (4.50%)	9 (5.42%)
Concerns about moving into Year 7	7 (3.07%)	2 (1.80%)	2 (1.20%)
Respect from younger children	2 (0.88%)	2 (1.80%)	7 (4.22%)
Year 7 myth	11 (4.82%)	4 (4.50%)	20 (12.05%)

## Continuity of provision

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Academic continuity from Year 6 into Year 7	24 (10.53%)	11 (9.91%)	31 (16.26%)
Academic discontinuity between Years 6 and 7	23 (10.09%)	11 (9.91%)	15 (9.04%)
Preparation for Year 7	15 (6.58%)	5 (4.50%)	5 (2.70%)
Concerns with preparation for Year 7	4 (1.75%)	3 (2.70%)	3 (1.81%)
Positive impact of SATs in Years 6 and 7	18 (7.89%)	3 (2.70%)	0 (0.00%)
Concerns with SATs in Years 6 and 7	7 (3.07%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Continuity of language progression	22 (9.65%)	15 (13.51%)	24 (14.46%)
Concerns with continuity of language progression	20 (8.77%)	7 (6.31%)	2 (1.20%)

### Influence of choice of transfer school

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Friendship influence on school choice	4 (1.75%)	2 (1.80%)	0 (0.00%)
Family influence on school choice	2 (0.88%)	1 (0.90%)	0 (0.00%)
Relocation into catchment area	2 (0.88%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)

### Comparative analysis: Evaluating the transition process from preliminary student voice activity

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Positive statements about transfer	143 (62.72%)	78 (70.27%)	103 (62.05%)
Negative statements about transfer	85 (37.28%)	33 (29.73%)	63 (37.95%)



**Comparative analysis:** Key categories arising from preliminary child interviews

	<b>Case 1</b>	<b>Case 2</b>	<b>Case 3</b>
Positive statements on transfer	<b>Academic Year 6 highlights</b> 36 (15.79%)	<b>Academic Year 6 highlights</b> 33 (29.73%)	<b>Academic continuity</b> 31 (16.26%)
Statements highlighting issues on transfer	<b>Academic discontinuity</b> 23 (10.09%) <b>Continuity of language progression</b> 22 (9.65%)	<b>Academic discontinuity</b> 11 (9.91%)	<b>Year 7 myth</b> 20 (12.05%)

**Comparative analysis:** Collective distribution of key negative categories from preliminary child interviews

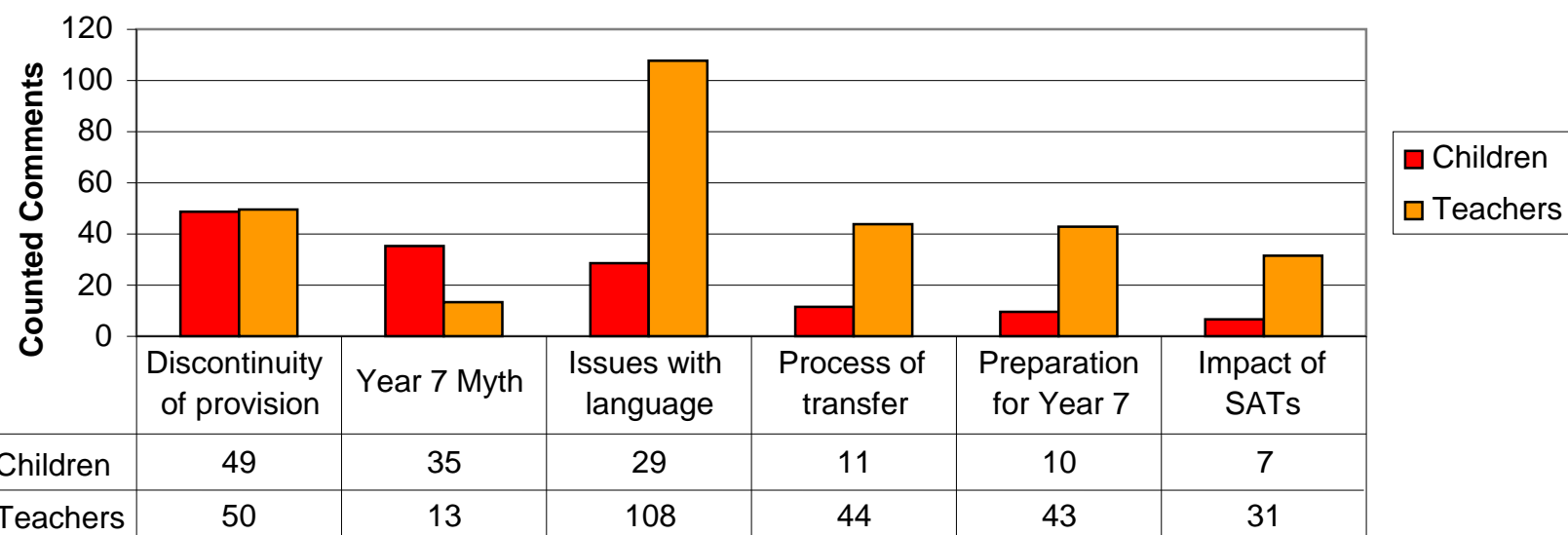
	Collected counted statements (out of 505 recorded)	% of statements recorded
Academic discontinuity between Years 6 and 7	49	9.70%
Year 7 myth	35	6.93%
Academic Year 6 issues	31	6.15%
Concerns with continuity of language progression	29	5.74%
Concerns about moving into Year 7	11	2.18%
Concerns with preparation for Year 7	10	1.98%
Concerns with SATs in Years 6 and 7	7	1.39%
Relocation into catchment area	2	0.40%

**Preliminary investigation:** Issues of transfer comparing staff and student voice

	<b>Children's collected counted statements (out of 505 recorded)</b>	<b>Staff collected counted statements (out of 959 recorded)</b>
Discontinuity of provision	49 (9.70%)	50 (5.21%)
Year 7 myth	35 (6.93%)	13 (1.35%)
Issues with language progression	29 (5.74%)	108 (11.26%)
Issues with transfer process	11 (2.18%)	44 (4.48%)
Issues with preparing children for Year 7*	10 (1.98%)	43 (4.48%)
Impact of SATs	7 (1.39%)	31 (3.23%)

\* Merge issues with data transfer and unfamiliarity of transfer school (staff interviews)

## Comparison of issues between staff and child voice: Preliminary Investigation



## **Appendix 4**

### **Initial analysis of lesson observation and independent learning activity**

#### **Phase 2: Initial coding data**

##### **Contents**

Lesson observation

Independent learning activity

Child voice

## PHASE 2

### Observation Recording Analysis

#### Coding categories and definitions

**Exploratory/reasoning ‘talk’ coding:** initial count of the actual words spoken

	Definition of coding
<b>Because</b>	Giving justification for the spoken statement
<b>So</b>	Giving clarification for the spoken statement
<b>If</b>	Deepening the justification and clarification of spoken statement
<b>Yes</b>	Agreeing to preceding statement with or without justification or clarification
<b>No</b>	Disagreeing to the preceding statement with or without justification or clarification
<b>Questions</b>	Questions asked by participants throughout learning activity

#### Question analysis

	Definition of coding
<b>Open questions</b>	Questions that allow multiple answers, generate discussion and deepen understanding of key concepts
<b>Closed questions</b>	Questions that allow utterances and single answers
<b>Task progression</b>	Discussion of task that requests ideas and meaning for task progression
<b>Seeking clarification</b>	Clarification of ideas and meaning
<b>Presenting ideas</b>	Demonstrating ideas to complete the task set through discussion
<b>Keyword definition</b>	Requesting definition of subject-specific word
<b>Spelling of word</b>	Requesting spelling of word
<b>Classroom routine</b>	Requesting routines. For example, movement around the classroom, silence or classroom expectations

## Positive and negative statements

	Definition of coding
<b>Positive statements</b>	Statements of praise and positive acknowledgement of ideas that keep the task moving forward
<b>Negative statements</b>	Statements that disagree with others, that have the potential to prevent the task moving forward. Also statements of poor self-esteem

## Task progression analysis

	Definition of coding
<b>Giving instructions</b>	Give a specific instruction for successful completion of learning activity/task
<b>Task progression</b>	Statements related to learning activity. These statements are not structured by questions
<b>Requesting help</b>	Asking help from teacher/peer to clarify learning activity, or task
<b>Managing resources</b>	Statements based on resources associated with learning activity, or task. These are not requesting resources
<b>Giving advice</b>	Offering advice for successful completion of learning activity, or task
<b>Preventing frustration</b>	Ensuring all participants are effectively working on-task without getting disheartened
<b>Frustration</b>	Statements reflecting becoming disheartened with learning activity, or task
<b>Timing of task</b>	Timing given for completion of individual tasks
<b>Use of child name</b> (teacher only)	Using a child's first name

# Lesson observation

## **Content**

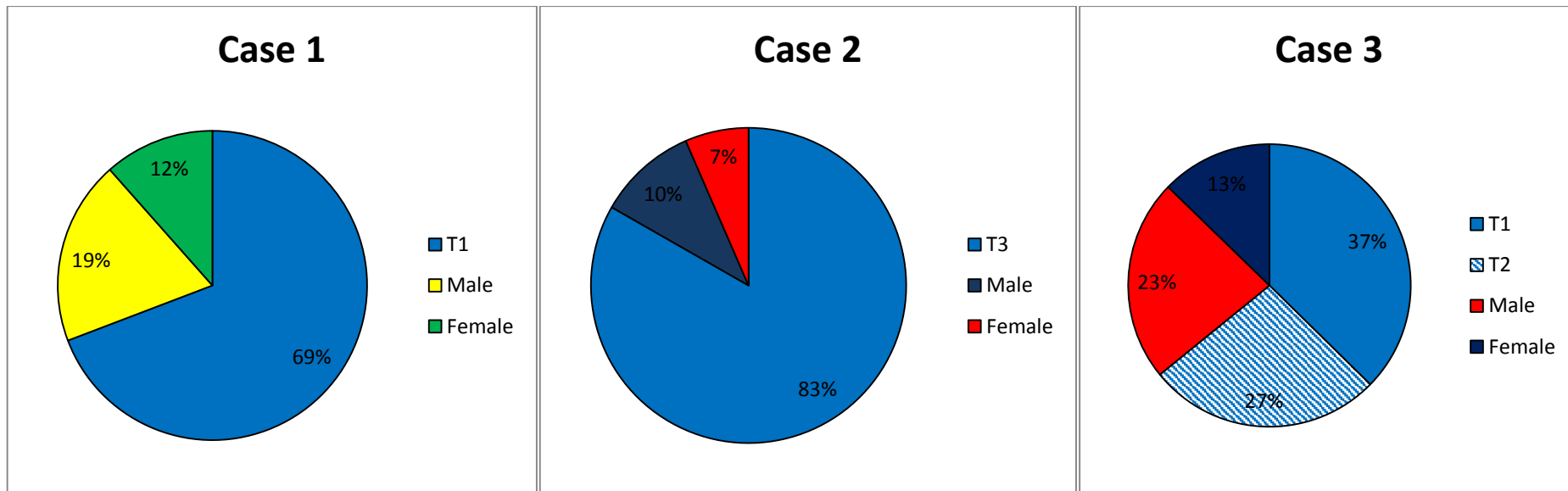
Participant Talk Analysis  
Category Analysis  
Total Comparative Analysis  
Script Citation Analysis  
Participant talk

## **Abbreviations in tables**

T: Teacher  
M: Male student  
F: Female student  
*Number of statements recorded*



	T1	Case 1		T3	Case 2		T5	Case 3		
		M	F		M	F		T6	M	F
Number of learning talk statements recorded	654 69%	182 19%	109 12%	383 83%	47 10%	30 7%	226 37%	162 27%	140 23%	77 13%

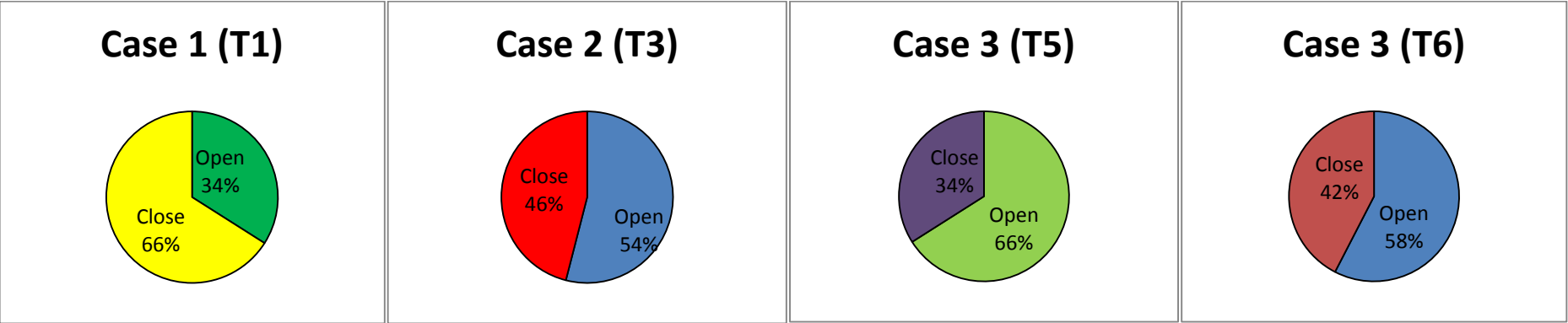


Category data

Each data table represents collective percentage of each category

Open and closed question analysis

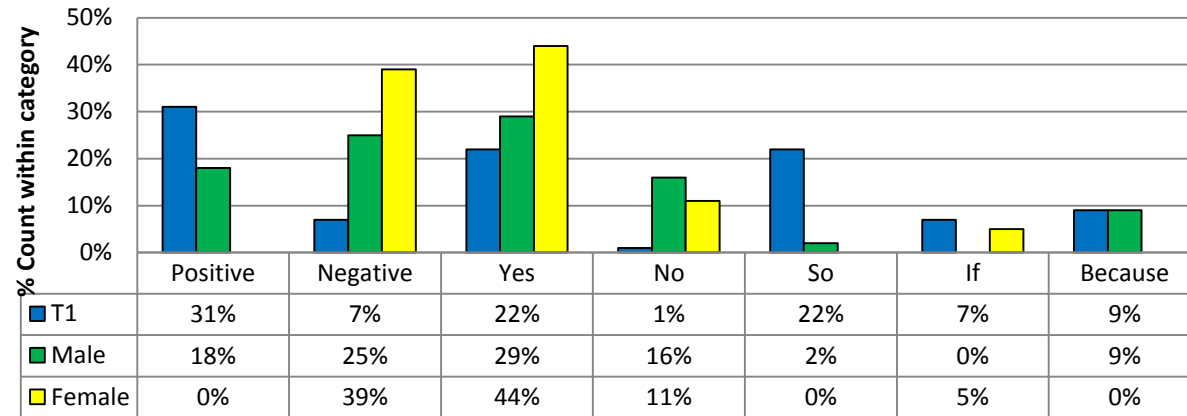
	Case 1 T1	Case 2 T3	T5	Case 3 T6
Open questions	61 34%	41 54%	33 66%	28 58%
Closed questions	118 66%	35 46%	17 34%	17 42%



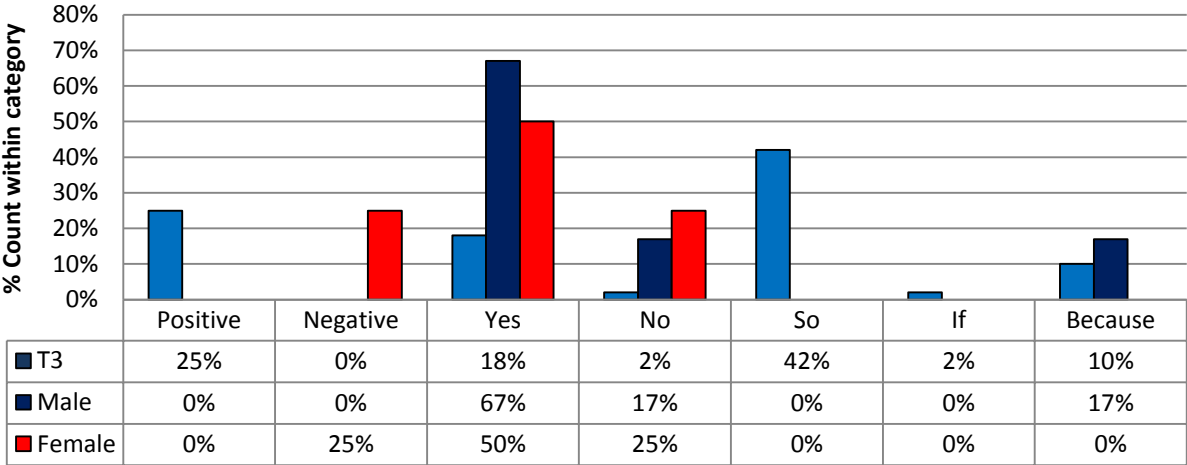
!KWIX Analysis and Positive/negative to support task progression  
Category analysis

	Case 1			Case 2			Case 3			
	T1	M	F	T3	M	F	T5	T6	M	F
<b>Positive statements</b>	50 31%	8 18%	0 0%	21 25%	0 0%	0 0%	44 62%	25 71%	10 36%	4 31%
<b>Negative statements</b>	12 7%	11 25%	7 39%	0 0%	0 0%	1 25%	2 3%	1 3%	1 3%	2 15%
<b>Because</b>	14 9%	4 9%	0 0%	8 10%	1 17%	0 0%	5 7%	2 6%	7 26%	6 46%
<b>So</b>	35 22%	1 2%	0 0%	35 42%	0 0%	0 0%	13 18%	5 14%	7 2%	0 0%
<b>If</b>	11 7%	0 0%	1 5%	2 2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 1%	0 0%	1 3%	0 0%
<b>Yes</b>	35 22%	13 29%	8 44%	15 18%	4 67%	2 50%	5 7%	2 6%	7 26%	0 0%
<b>No</b>	2 1%	7 16%	2 11%	2 2%	1 17%	1 25%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	1 8%

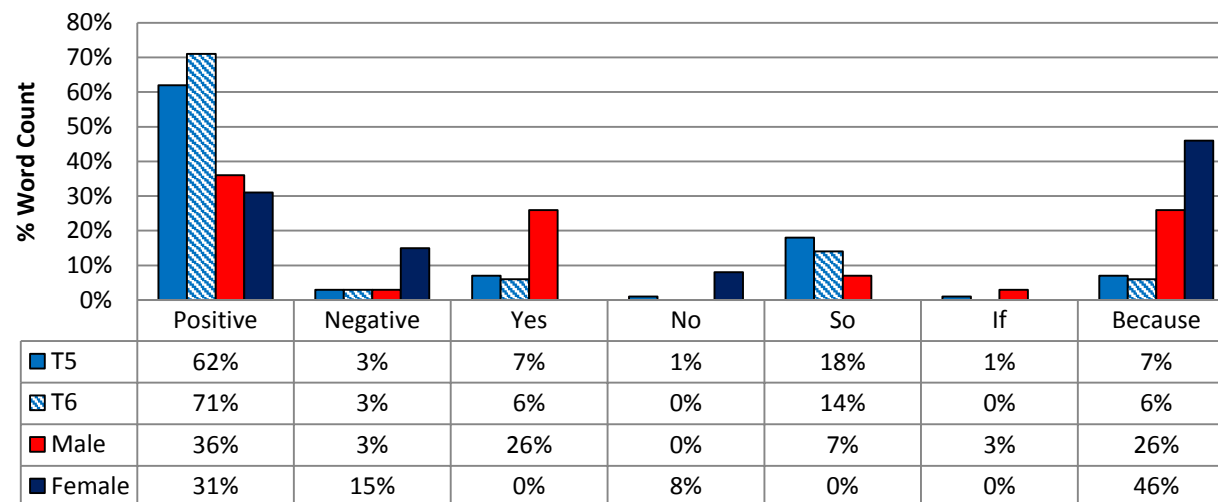
### Case 1: !Kwix analysis (category)



Case 2: !KWIX analysis (category)



### Case 3: !KWIX analysis (category)

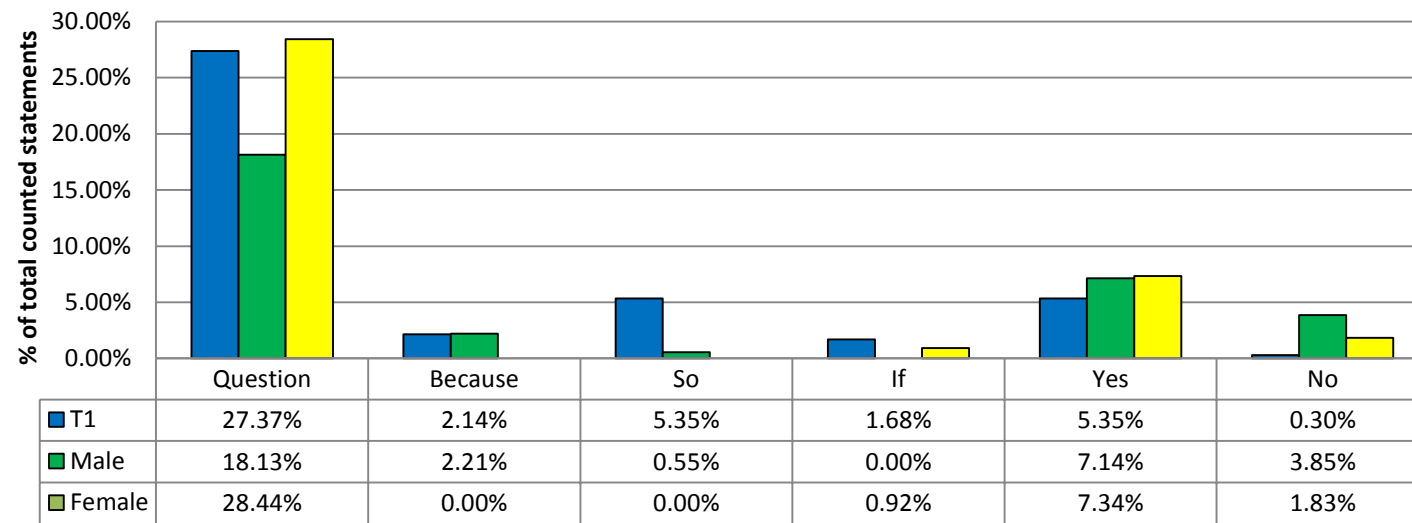


## !KWIX Analysis

Total counted statements

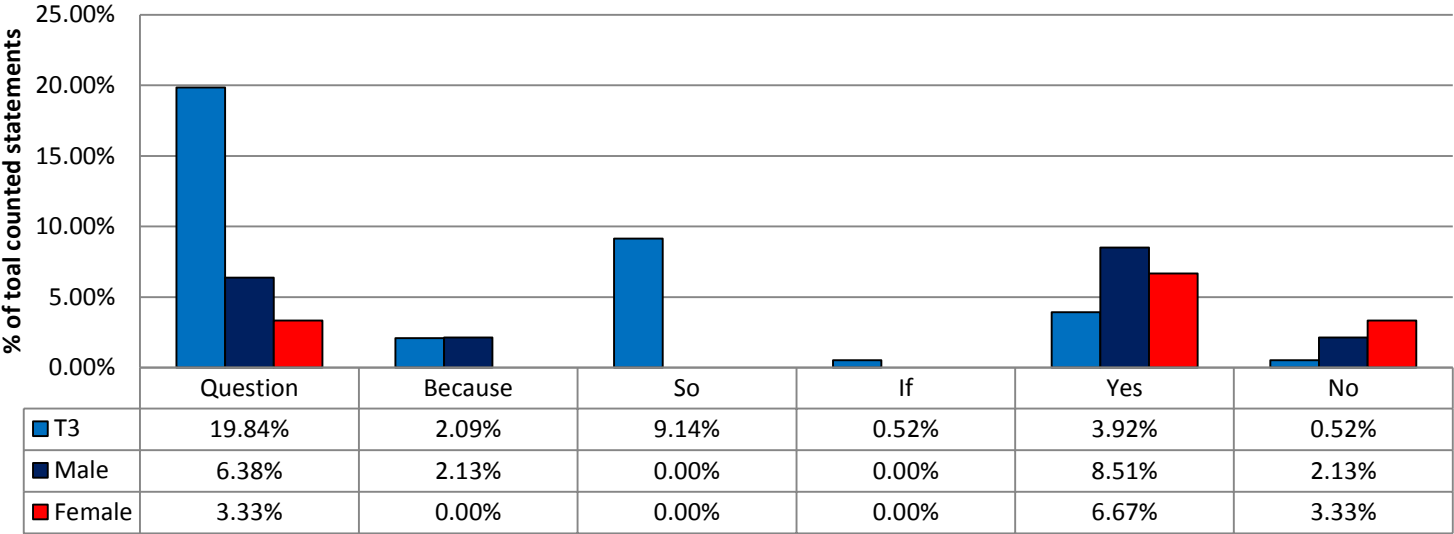
	T1	Case 1 M	F	T3	Case 2 M	F	T5	Case 3 T6	M	F
<b>Questions asked</b>	179 27.37%	33 18.13	31 28.44%	76 18.84%	3 6.68%	1 3.33%	50 22.12%	66 40.74%	17 12.14%	11 14.28%
<b>Because</b>	14 2.14%	4 2.21%	0 0.00%	8 2.09%	1 2.13%	0 0.00%	5 5.21%	2 1.23%	7 5.00%	6 7.79%
<b>So</b>	35 5.35%	1 0.55%	0 0.00%	35 9.14%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	13 5.75%	5 3.09%	2 1.43%	0 0.00%
<b>If</b>	11 1.68%	0 0.00%	1 0.92%	2 0.52%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 0.44%	0 0.00%	1 1.71%	0 0.00%
<b>Yes</b>	35 5.35%	13 7.14%	8 7.34%	15 3.92%	4 8.51%	2 6.67%	5 2.21%	2 1.23%	7 5.00%	0 0.00%
<b>No</b>	2 0.30%	7 3.85%	2 1.83%	2 0.52%	1 2.13%	1 3.33%	1 0.44%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.30%

## Case 1: !KWIX collective analysis

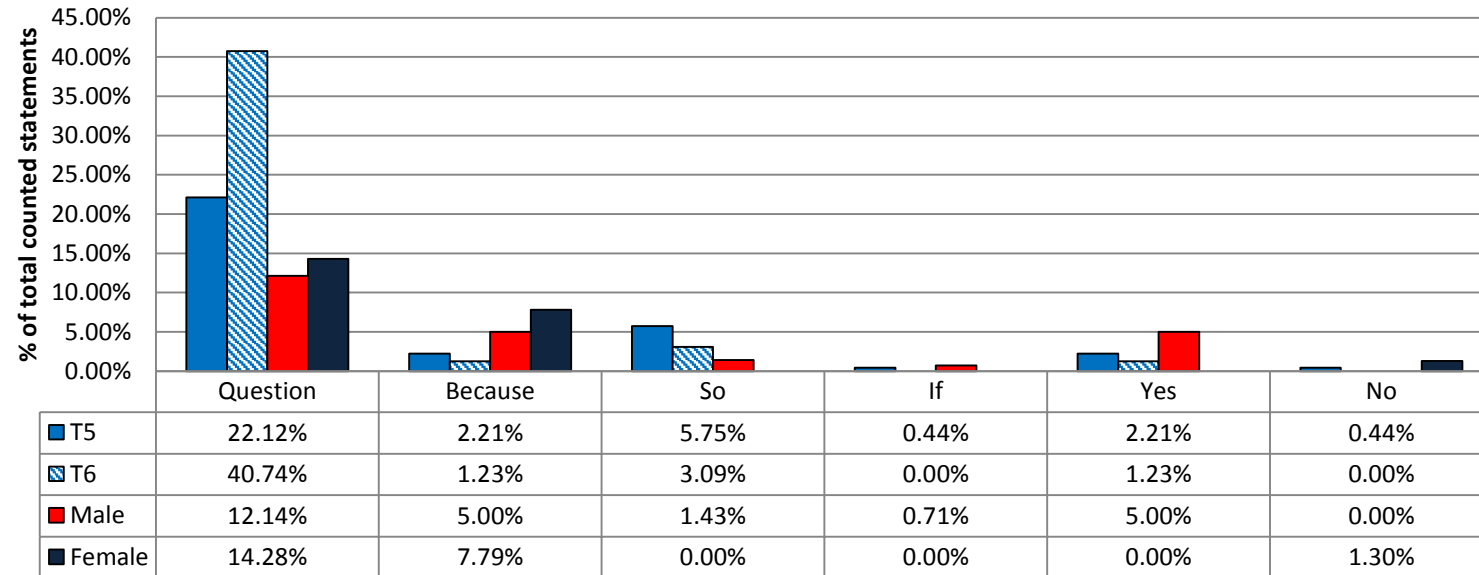




Case 2: !KWIX collective analysis



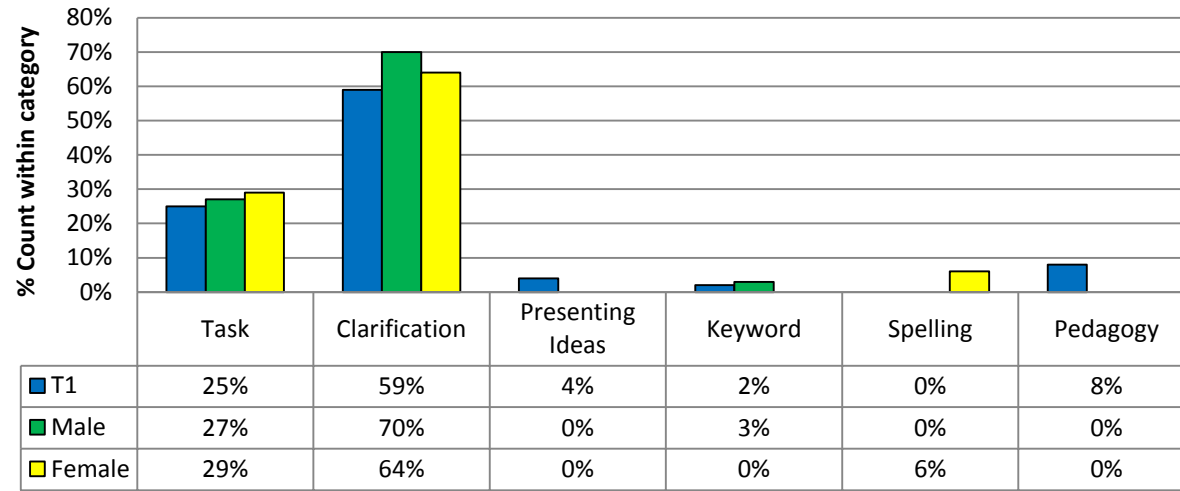
### Case 3: !KWIX collective analysis



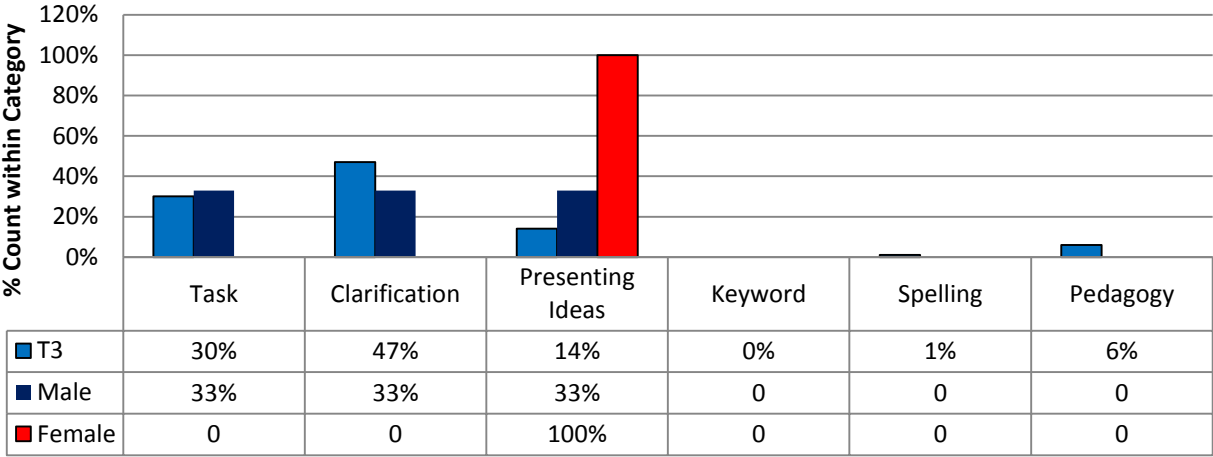
## Question analysis

	T1	Case 1 M	F	T3	Case 2 M	F	T5	Case 3 T6	M	F
<b>Task progression</b>	47 25%	9 27%	9 29%	23 30%	1 33%	0 0%	22 44%	28 42%	4 23%	4 36%
<b>Seeking clarification</b>	106 59%	23 70%	20 64%	36 47%	1 33%	0 0%	17 34%	23 35%	11 65%	5 45%
<b>Presenting ideas</b>	8 4%	0 0%	0 0%	11 14%	1 33%	1 100%	5 10%	11 17%	2 12%	2 18%
<b>Keyword definition</b>	3 2%	1 3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	4 6%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Spelling of word</b>	0 0%	0 0%	2 6%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Classroom routine</b>	15 8%	0 0%	0 0%	5 6%	0 0%	0 0%	4 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

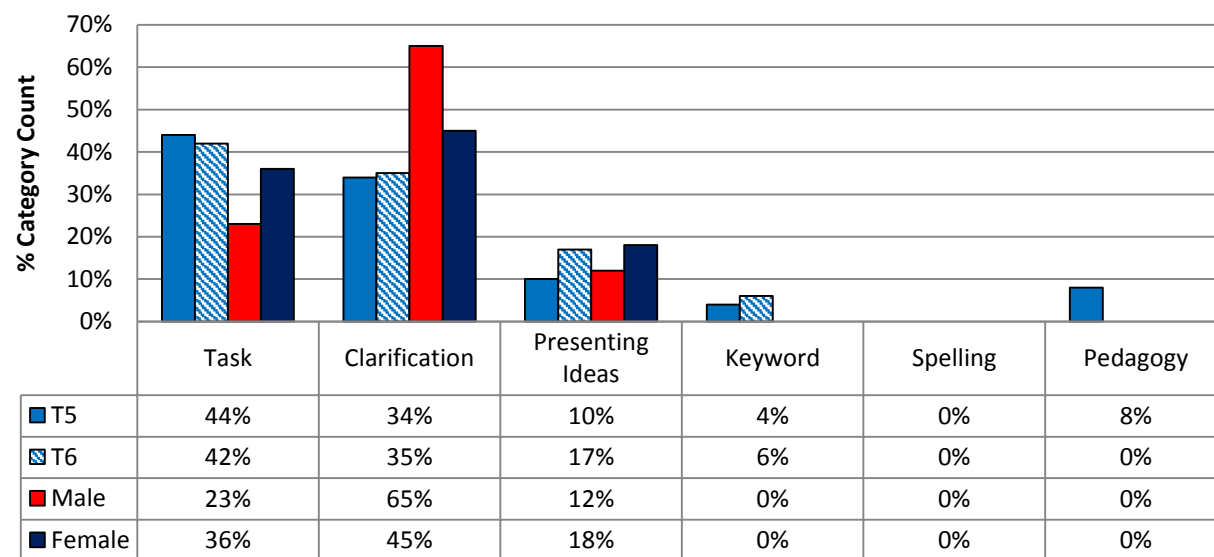
## Case 1: Question analysis



Case 2: Question analysis



### Case 3: Lesson activity question analysis

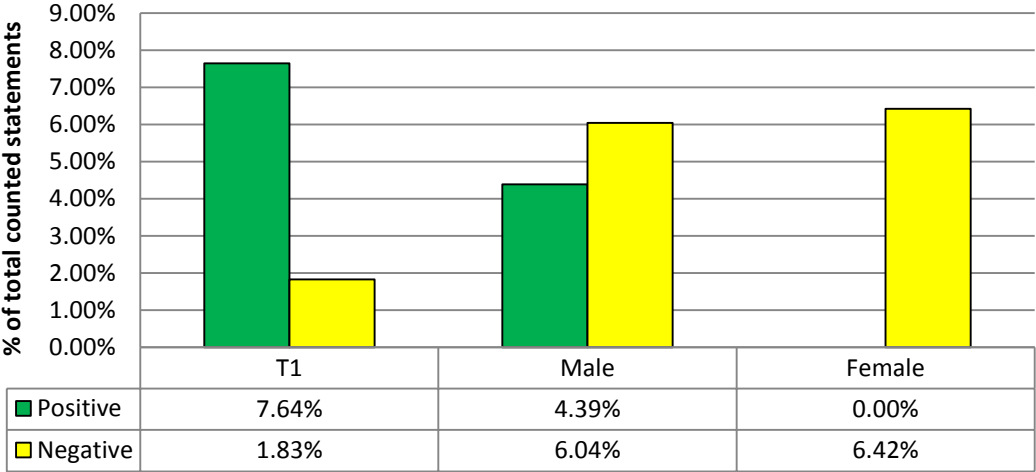


### Positive and negative statements

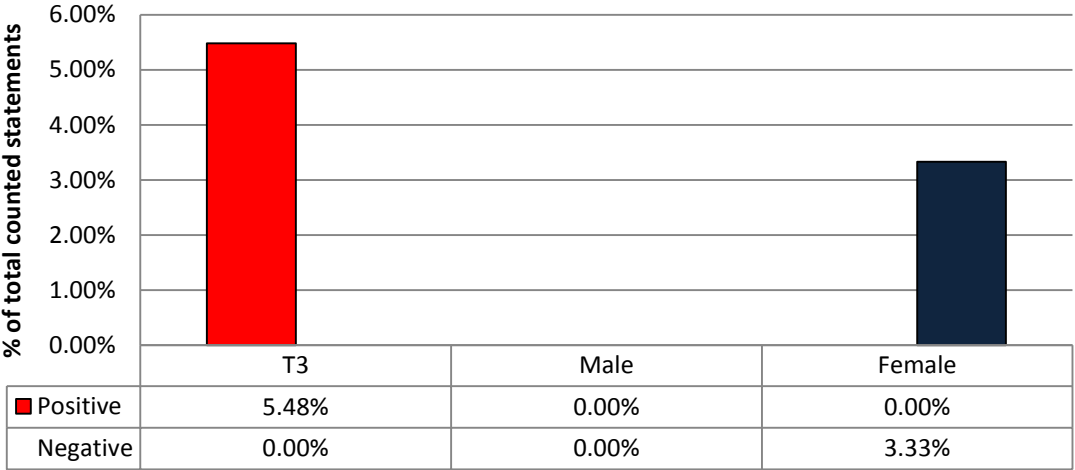
*To keep the lesson moving forward or hinder the learning activity*

	Case 1			Case 2			Case 3			
	T1	M	F	T3	M	F	T5	T6	M	F
Positive statements	50 7.64%	8 4.39%	0 0.00%	21 5.48%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	44 19.47%	25 15.43%	10 7.14%	4 5.19%
Negative statements	12 1.83%	11 6.04%	7 6.42%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 3.33%	2 0.88%	1 0.62%	1 0.71%	2 2.60%

Case 1: Positive and negative statements

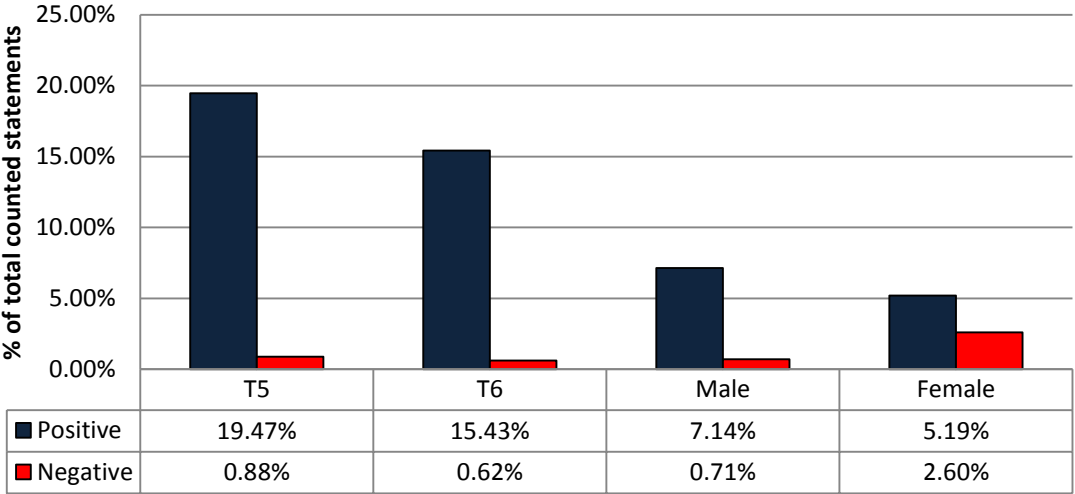


Case 2: Positive and negative statements





Case 3: Positive and negative statements

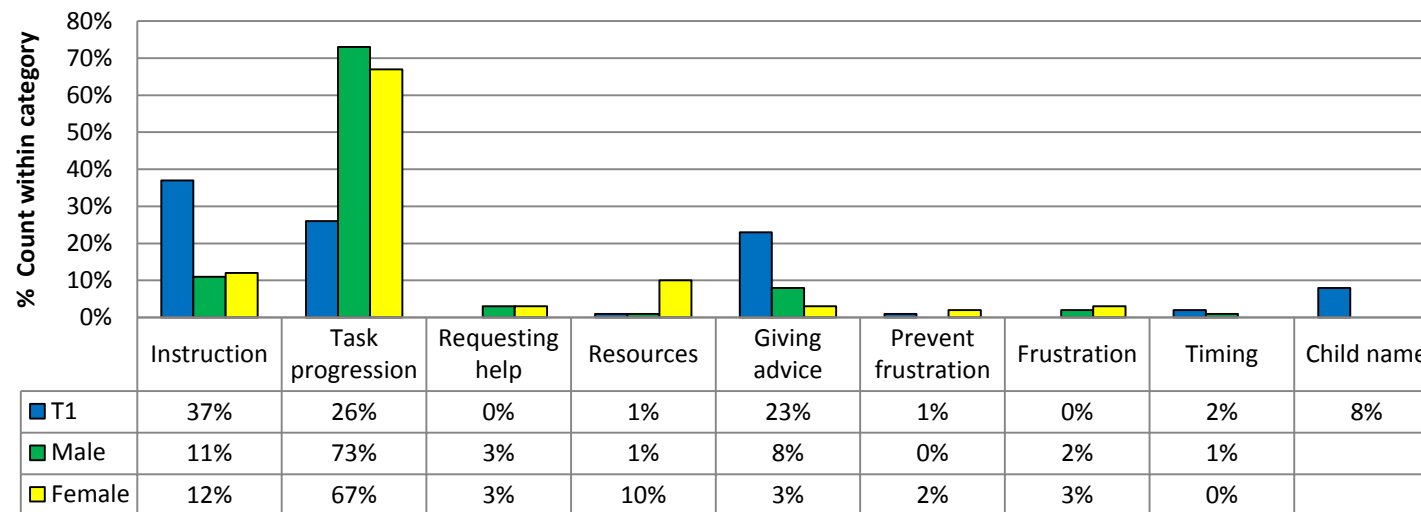


## Task progression analysis

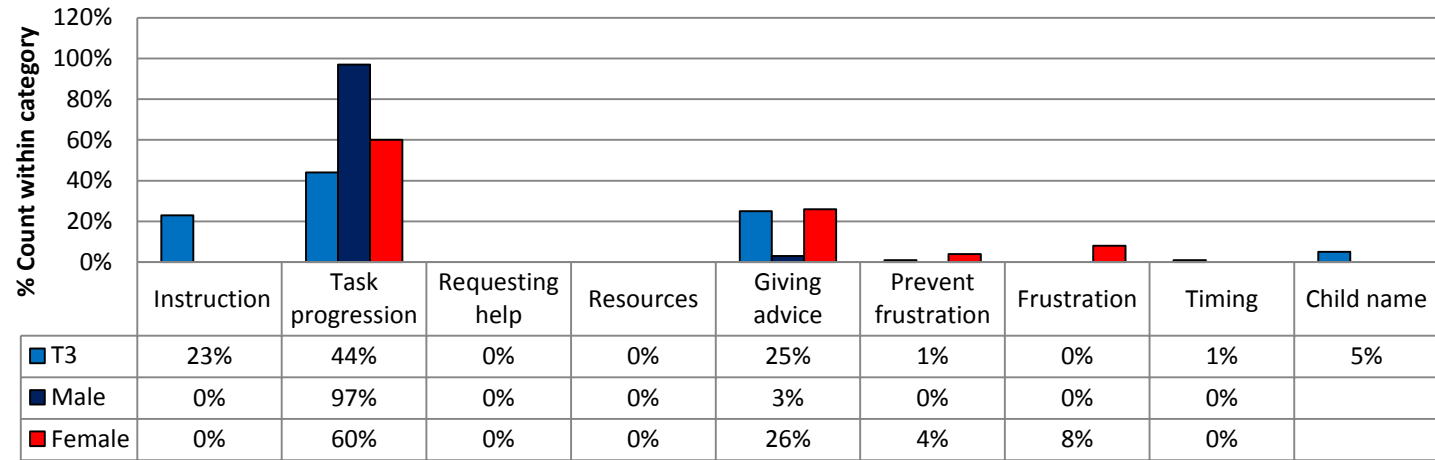
### Category analysis

		Case 1			Case 2		Case 3			
	T1	M	F	T3	M	F	T5	T6	M	F
<b>Giving instructions</b>	129 37%	12 11%	7 12%	55 23%	0 0%	0 0%	39 30%	9 15%	1 1%	6 11%
<b>Task progression</b>	91 26%	77 73%	40 67%	104 44%	37 97%	15 60%	32 25%	28 46%	67 70%	40 75%
<b>Requesting help</b>	0 0%	3 3%	2 3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 7%	0 0%
<b>Managing resources</b>	3 1%	1 1%	6 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Giving advice</b>	81 23%	9 8%	2 3%	60 25%	1 3%	7 26%	26 20%	23 38%	13 14%	4 7%
<b>Preventing frustration</b>	5 1%	0 0%	2 1%	3 1%	0 0%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	3 3%	0 0%
<b>Frustration</b>	0 0%	2 2%	2 3%	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	0 0%	0 0%	3 3%	3 6%
<b>Timing of learning activity</b>	7 2%	1 1%	0 0%	2 1%	0 0%	0 0%	8 6%	1 1%	1 1%	0 0%
<b>Use of child's name</b>	29 8%	N/A	N/A	11 5%	N/A	N/A	24 19%	0 0%	N/A	N/A

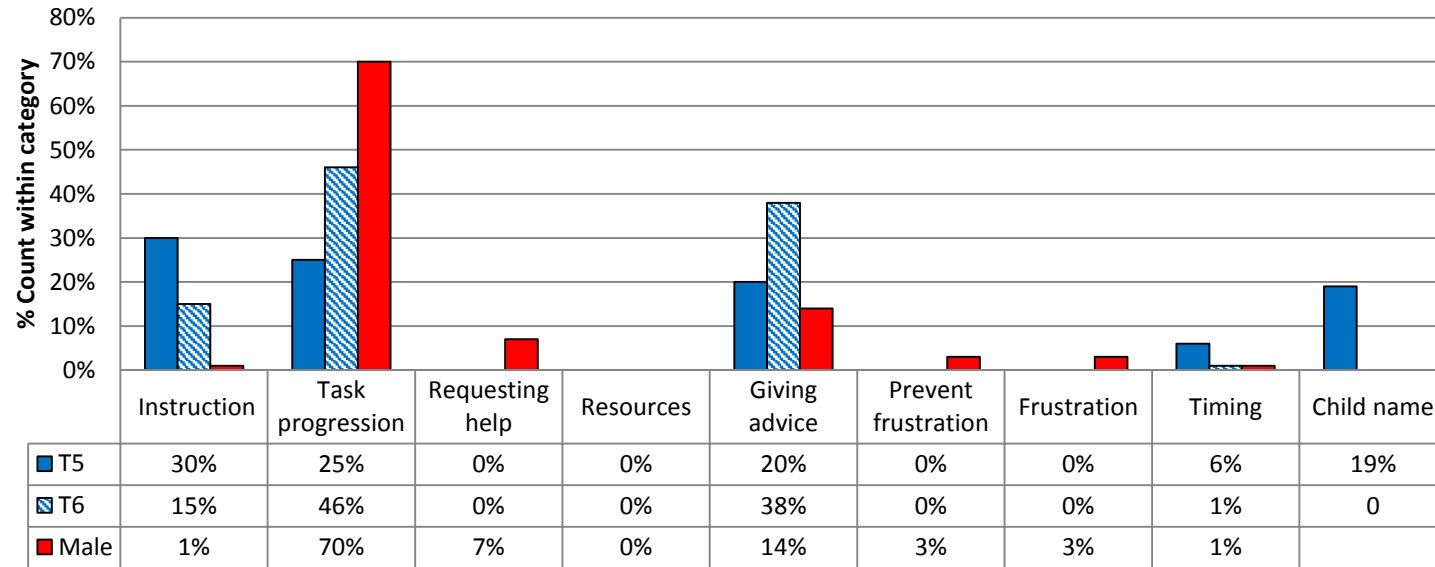
## Case 1: Task progression analysis



## Case 2: Task progression analysis



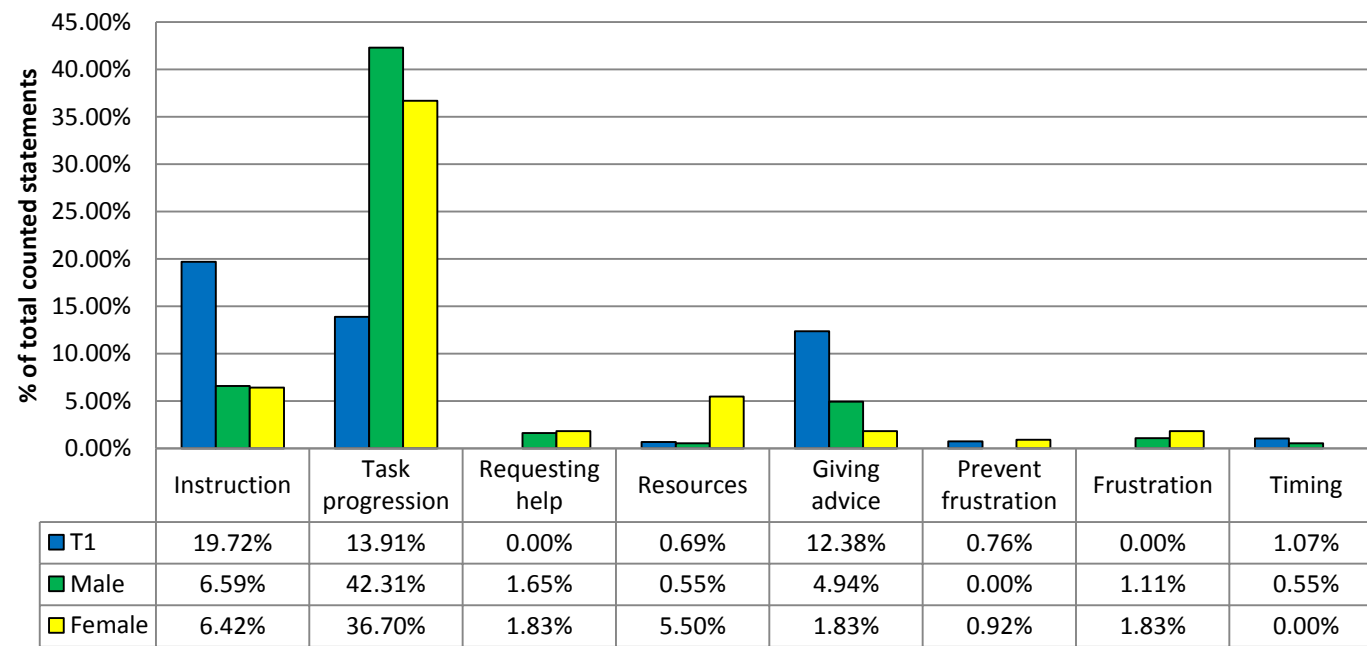
### Case 3: Task progression analysis



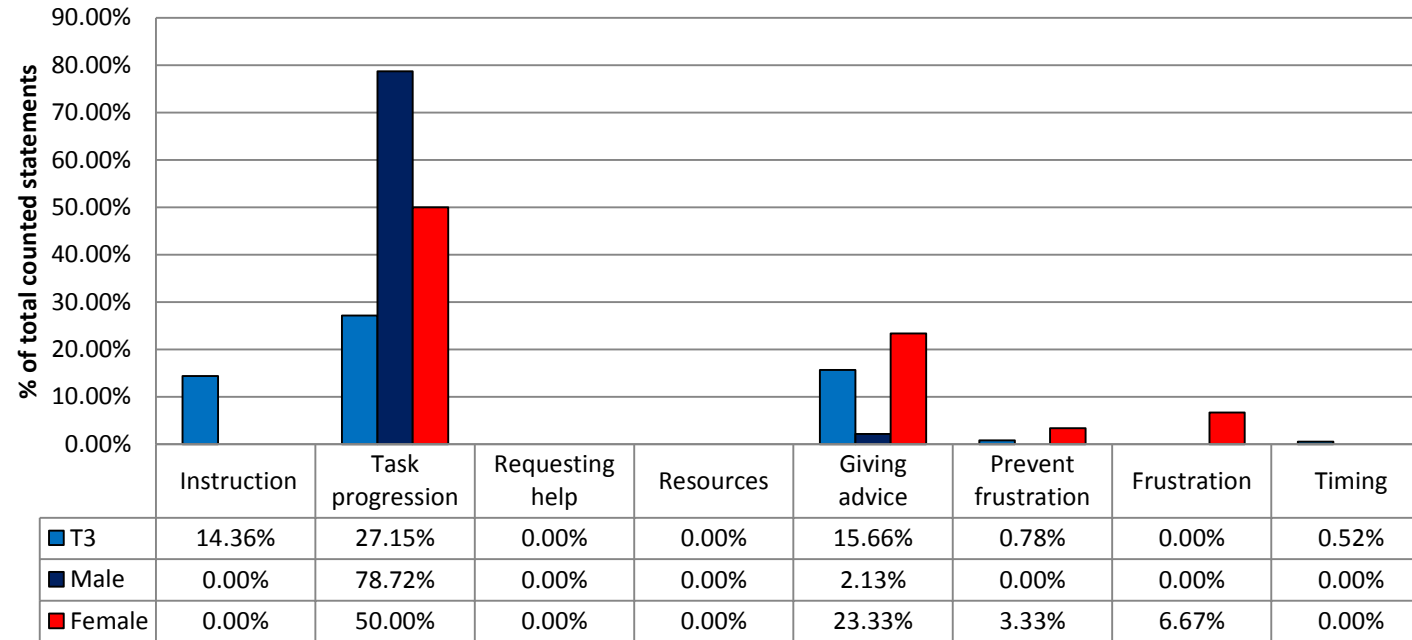
## Task progression analysis

	T1	Case 1 M	F	T3	Case 2 M	F	T5	Case 3 T6	M	F
<b>Giving instructions</b>	129 19.72%	12 6.59%	7 6.42%	55 14.36%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	39 17.26%	9 5.55%	1 0.71%	6 7.79%
<b>Task progression</b>	91 13.91%	77 42.31%	40 36.70%	104 27.15%	37 78.72%	15 50.00%	32 14.16%	28 17.28%	67 47.86%	40 51.95%
<b>Requesting help</b>	0 0.00%	3 1.65%	2 1.83%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	7 5.00%	0 0.00%
<b>Managing resources</b>	3 0.69%	1 0.55%	6 5.50%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
<b>Giving advice</b>	81 12.83%	9 4.94%	2 1.83%	60 15.66%	1 2.13%	7 23.33%	26 11.50%	23 14.20%	13 9.28%	4 5.19%
<b>Preventing frustration</b>	5 0.76%	0 0.00%	1 0.92%	3 0.78%	0 0.00%	1 3.33%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 2.14%	0 0.00%
<b>Frustration</b>	0 0.00%	2 1.11%	2 1.83%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 6.67%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 2.14%	3 3.90%
<b>Timing of learning activity</b>	7 1.07%	1 0.55%	0 0.00%	2 0.52%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	8 3.54%	1 0.62%	1 0.71%	0 0.00%

## Case 1: Task progression analysis

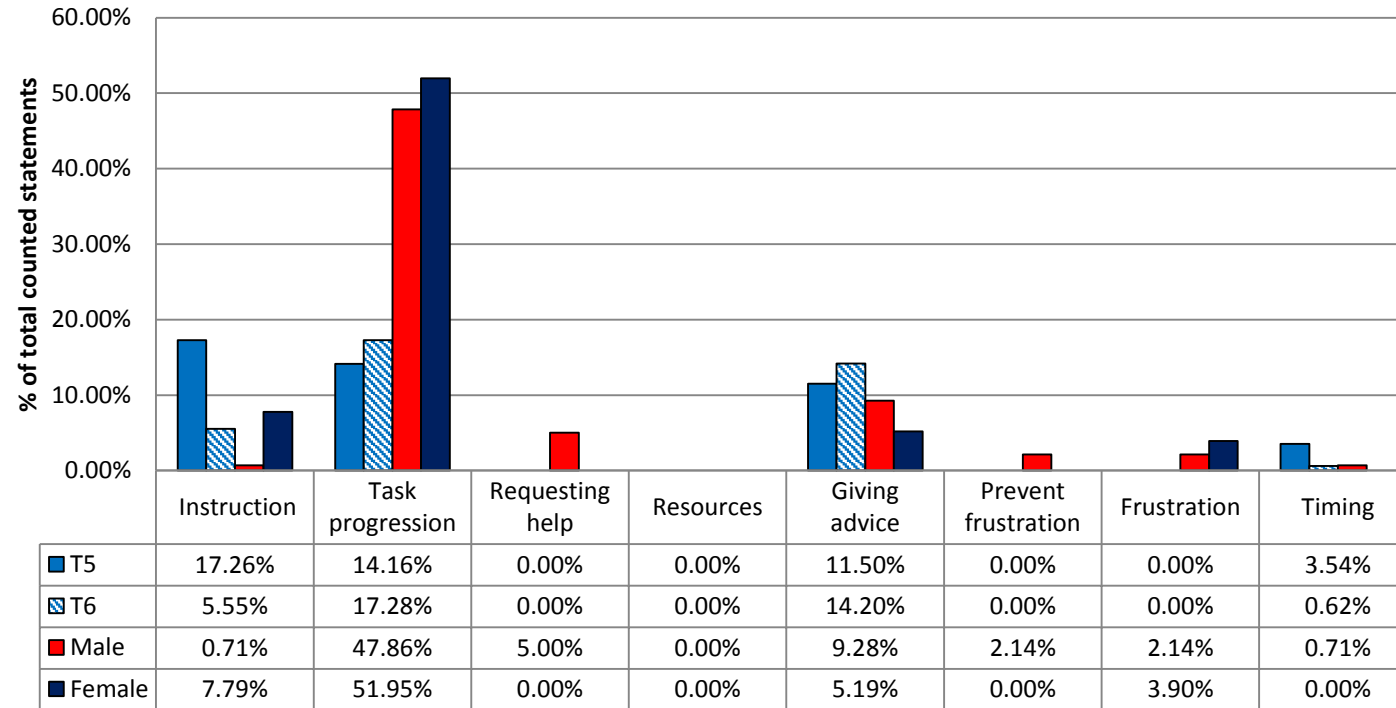


## Case 2: Task progression analysis





### Case 3: Analysis of task progression



# Independent learning activity

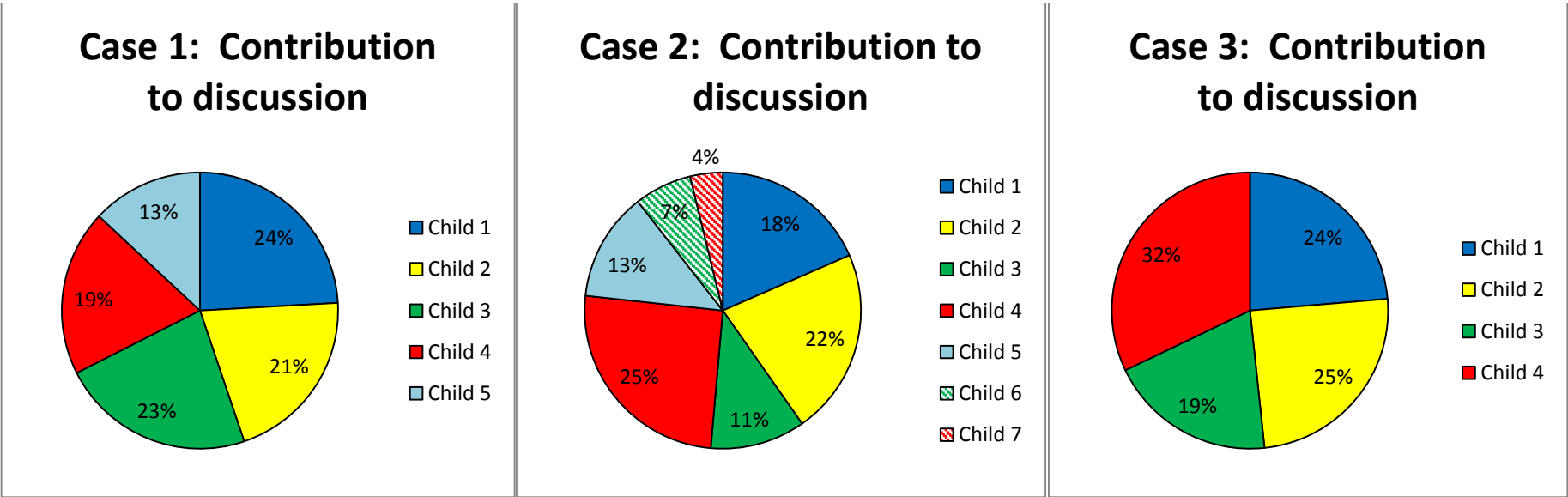
## *Raft activity*

### **Contents**

Contribution and category analysis  
Exploratory/reasoning talk analysis  
Positive/negative statement analysis  
Question analysis  
Task progression analysis

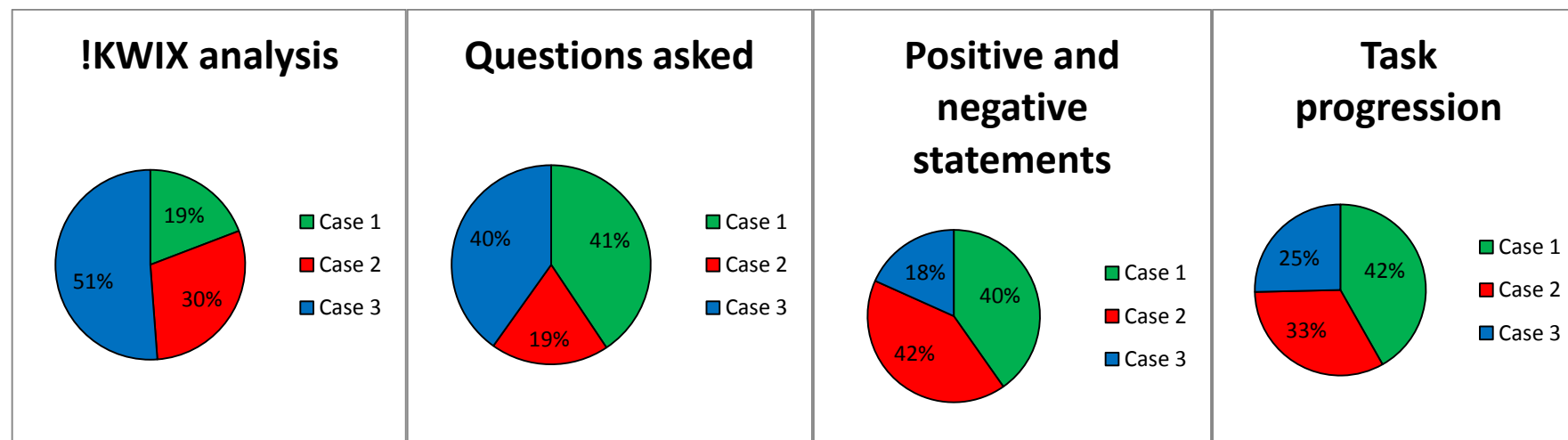
Contribution to discussion analysis

	Case 1					Case 2					Case 3					
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Talk	246 24%	211 21%	232 23%	198 19%	133 13%	126 18%	149 22%	76 11%	173 25%	87 13%	46 46%	26 4%	232 24%	242 25%	192 19%	315 32%



## Cluster category analysis

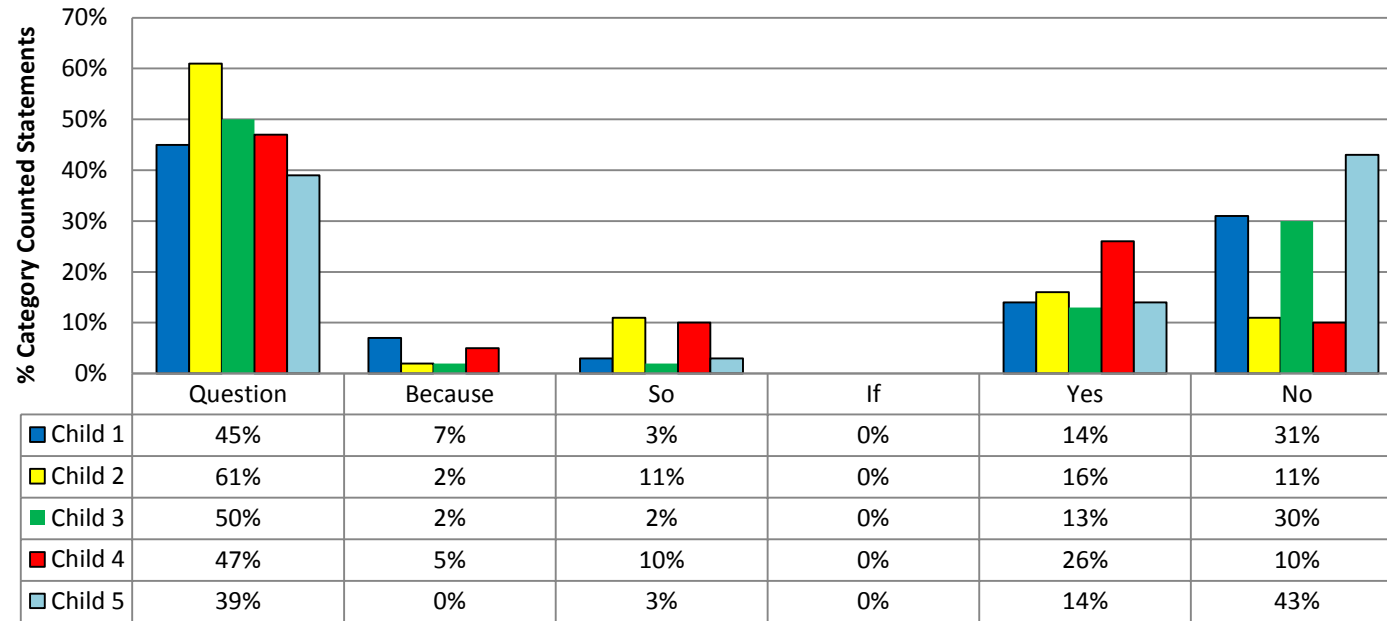
	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
<b>!KWIX Statements</b>	105 19%	162 30%	280 51%
<b>Questions asked</b>	169 41%	80 19%	167 40%
<b>Positive and negative statements</b>	99 40%	102 42%	45 18%
<b>Task progression statements</b>	542 42%	426 33%	329 25%



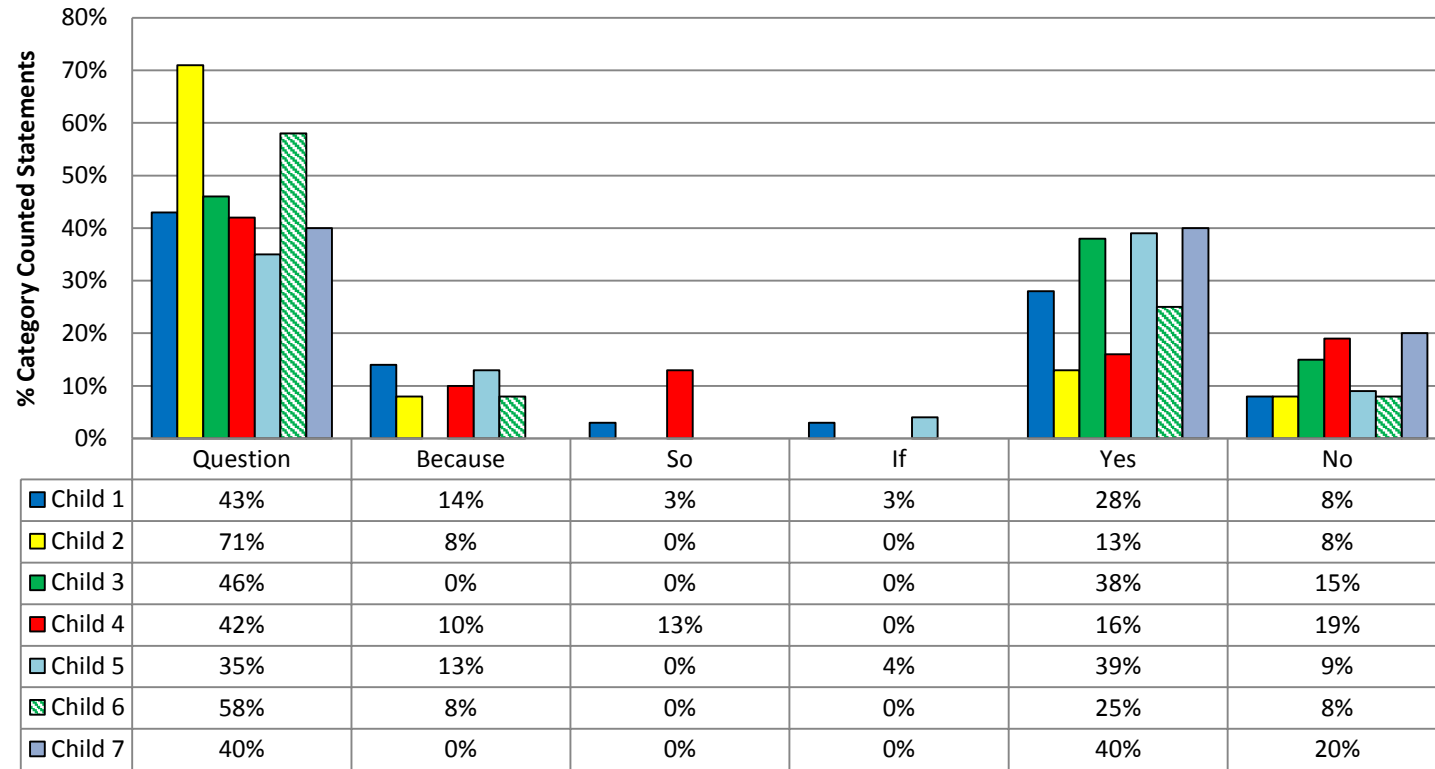
## !KWIX Comparative Analysis

	Case 1							Case 2					Case 3			
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
<b>Question</b>	13 45%	34 61%	30 50%	19 47%	11 39%	15 43%	27 71%	6 46%	13 42%	8 35%	7 58%	4 40%	30 53%	42 53%	34 61%	38 43%
<b>Because</b>	2 7%	1 2%	2 2%	2 5%	0 0%	5 14%	3 8%	0 0%	3 10%	3 13%	1 8%	0 0%	2 3%	4 5%	2 3%	5 6%
<b>So</b>	1 3%	6 11%	2 2%	4 10%	1 3%	1 3%	0 0%	0 0%	4 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	2 2%	4 7%	6 7%
<b>If</b>	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 2%	1 2%	1 1%
<b>Yes/Yeah</b>	4 14%	9 16%	3 13%	10 26%	4 14%	10 28%	5 13%	5 38%	5 16%	9 39%	3 25%	4 40%	16 28%	13 16%	10 18%	23 26%
<b>No</b>	9 31%	6 11%	18 30%	4 10%	12 43%	3 8%	3 8%	2 15%	6 19%	2 9%	2 8%	2 20%	8 14%	16 20%	5 9%	15 17%

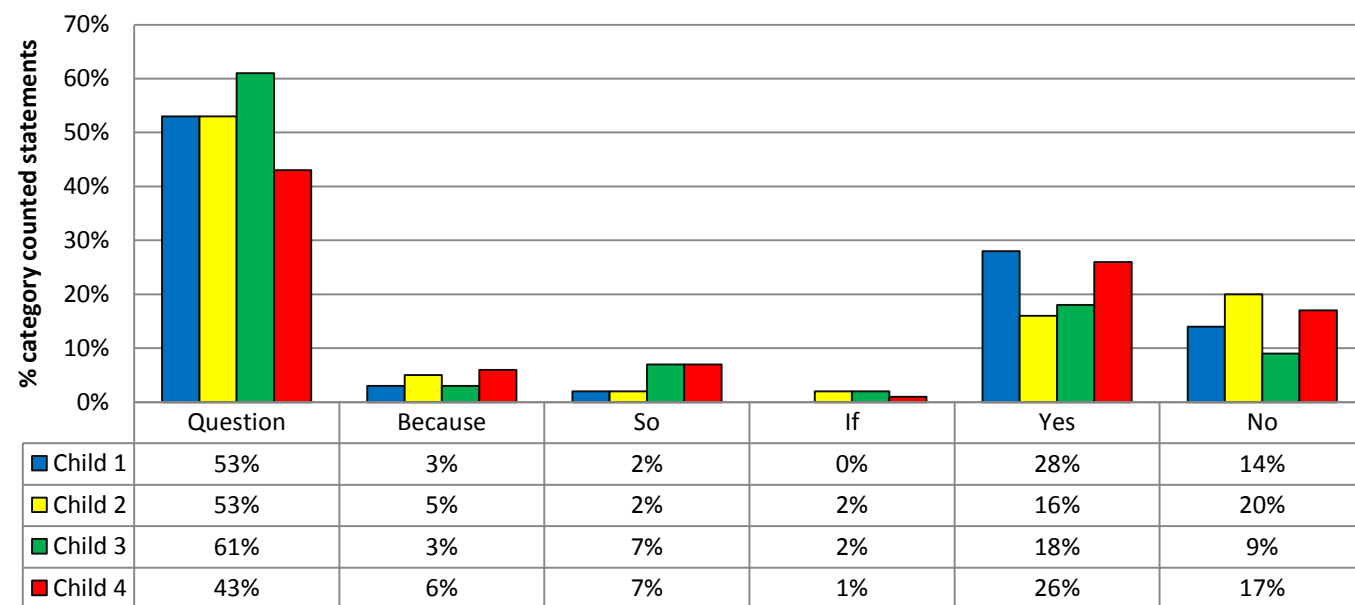
## Case 1: !KWIX category analysis



## Case 2: !KWIX category analysis



### Case 3: !KWIX category analysis

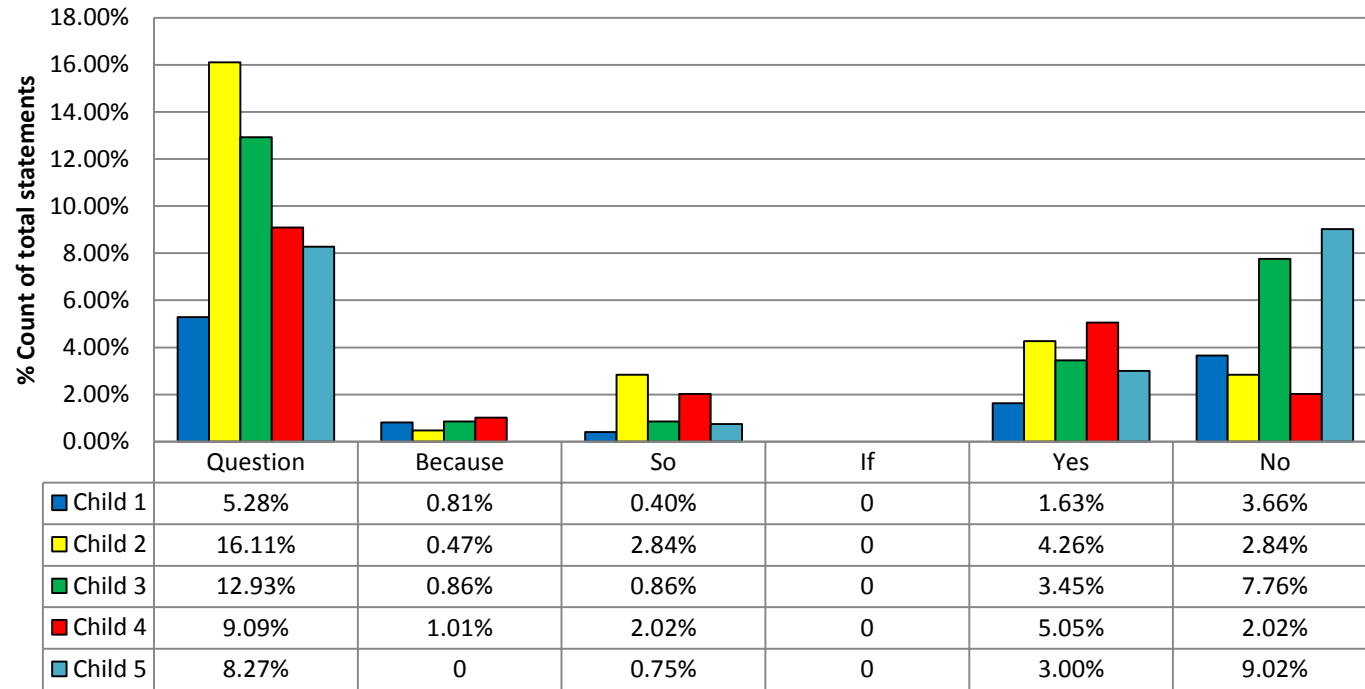




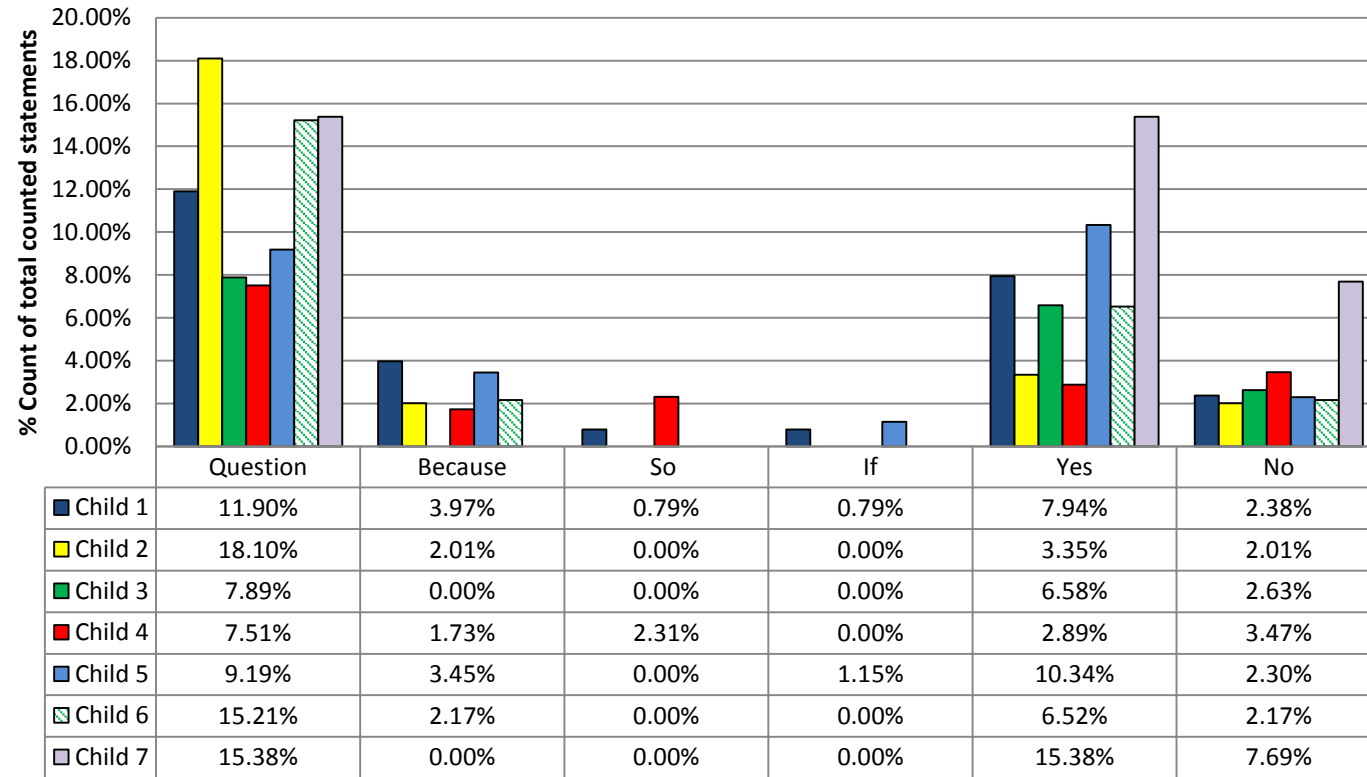
# !KWIX comparative analysis

	Case 1								Case 2				Case 3			
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
<b>Question</b>	13 5.28%	34 16.11%	30 12.93%	19 9.09%	11 8.27%	15 11.90%	27 18.10%	6 7.89%	13 7.51%	8 9.19%	7 15.21%	4 15.38%	30 12.94%	42 17.35%	34 17.71%	38 12.06%
<b>Because</b>	2 0.81%	1 0.47%	2 0.86%	2 1.01%	0 0.00%	5 3.97%	3 2.01%	0 0.00%	3 1.73%	3 3.45%	1 2.17%	0 0.00%	2 0.86%	4 1.65%	2 1.04%	5 1.59%
<b>So</b>	1 0.40%	6 2.84%	2 0.86%	4 2.02%	1 0.75%	1 0.79%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	4 2.31%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 0.43%	2 0.83%	4 2.08%	6 1.09%
<b>If</b>	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 0.79%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.15%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 0.83%	1 0.52%	1 0.32%
<b>Yes/Yeah</b>	4 1.63%	9 4.26%	3 3.45%	10 5.05%	4 3.00%	10 7.94%	5 3.35%	5 6.58%	5 2.89%	9 10.34%	3 6.62%	4 15.38%	16 6.90%	13 5.37%	10 5.21%	23 7.30%
<b>No</b>	9 3.66%	6 2.84%	18 7.76%	4 2.02%	12 9.02%	3 2.38%	3 2.01%	2 2.63%	6 3.47%	2 2.30%	2 2.17%	2 7.69%	8 3.45%	16 6.61%	5 2.60%	15 4.76%

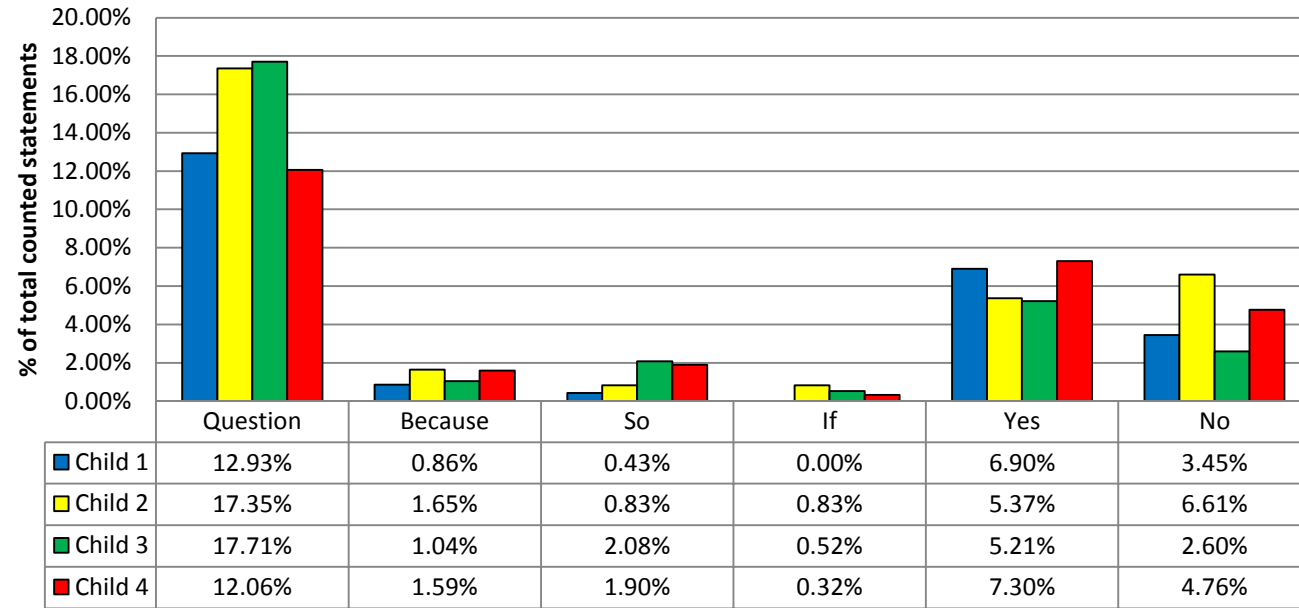
## Case 1: !KWIX analysis



## Case 2: !KWIX analysis



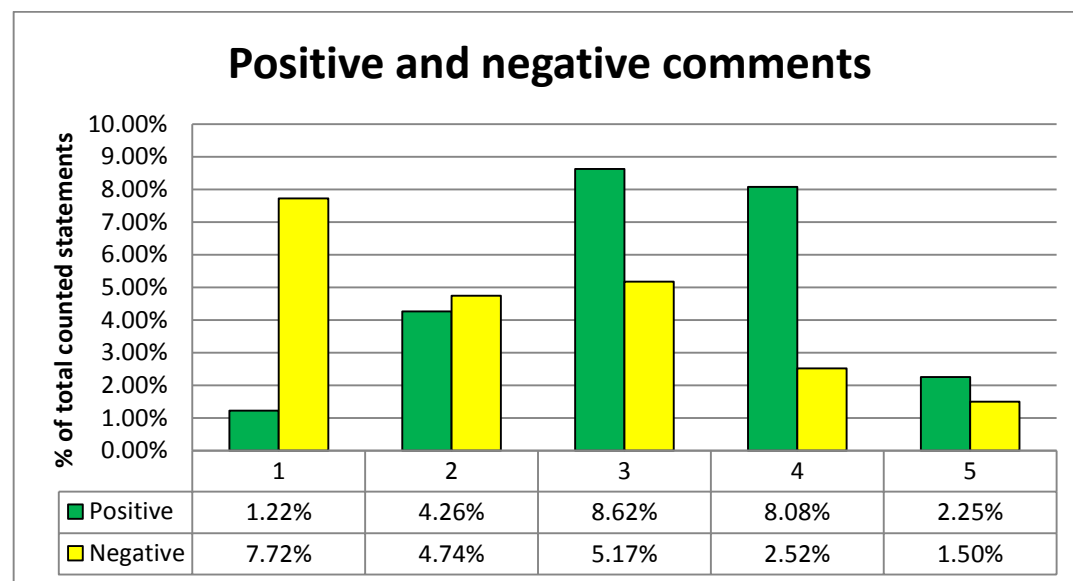
### Case 3: !KWIX analysis



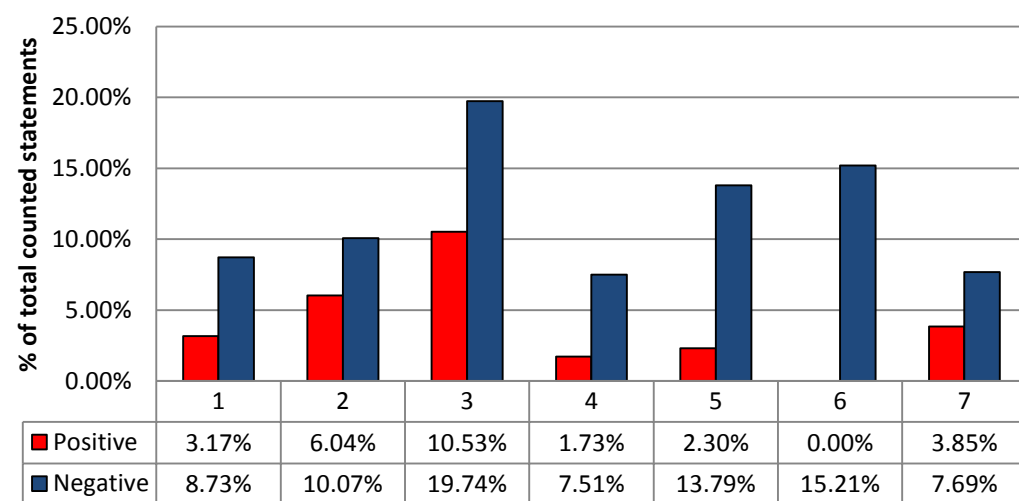
## Positive and negative comments

To keep task progressing, or hinder progress

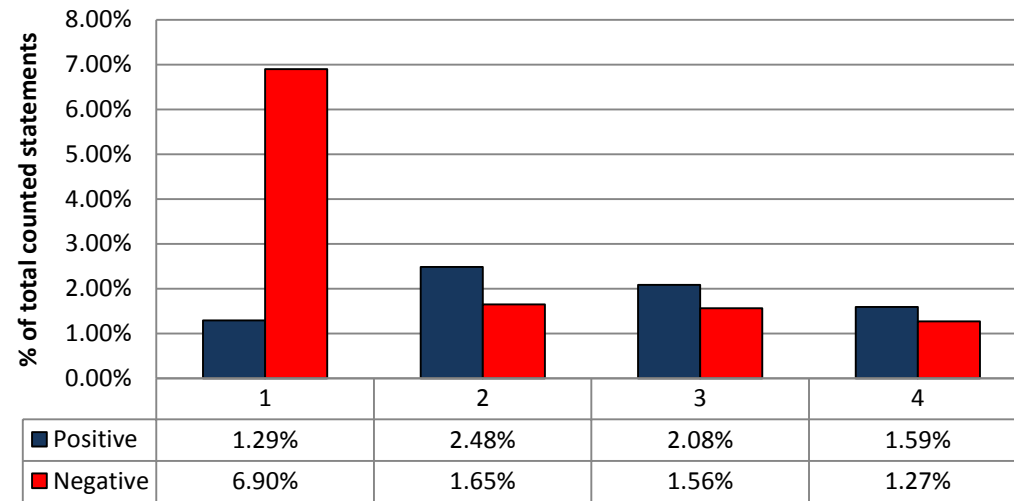
	Case 1					Case 2					Case 3					
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Positive	3 1.22%	9 4.26%	20 8.62%	16 8.08%	3 2.25%	4 3.17%	9 6.04%	8 10.53%	3 1.73%	2 2.30%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	3 1.29%	6 2.48%	4 2.08%	5 1.59%
Negative	19 7.72%	10 4.74%	12 5.17%	5 2.52%	2 1.50%	11 8.73%	15 10.07%	15 19.74%	13 7.51%	12 13.79%	7 15.71%	1 7.69%	16 6.90%	4 1.65%	2 1.56%	4 1.27%



## Case 2: Positive and negative comments



### Case 3: Positive and negative comments

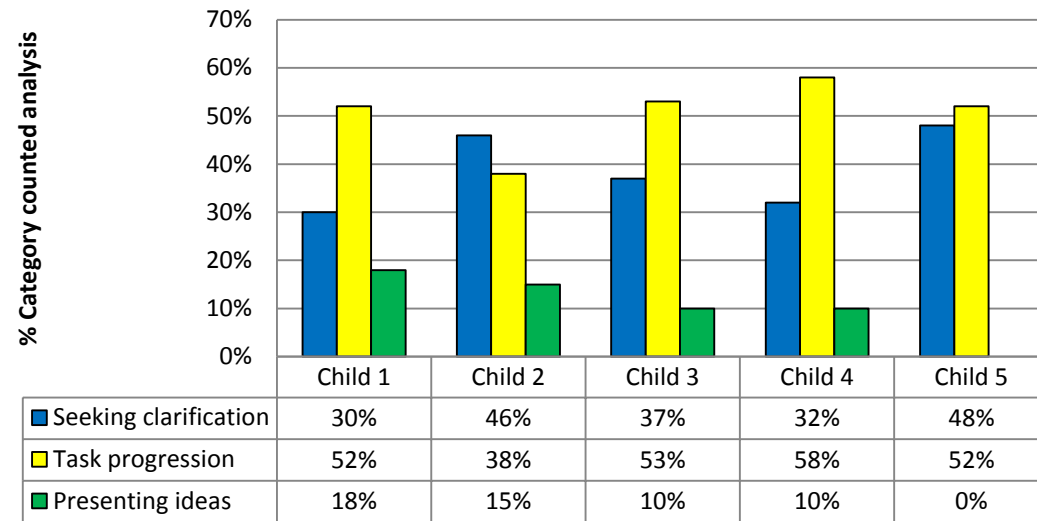


## Category question analysis

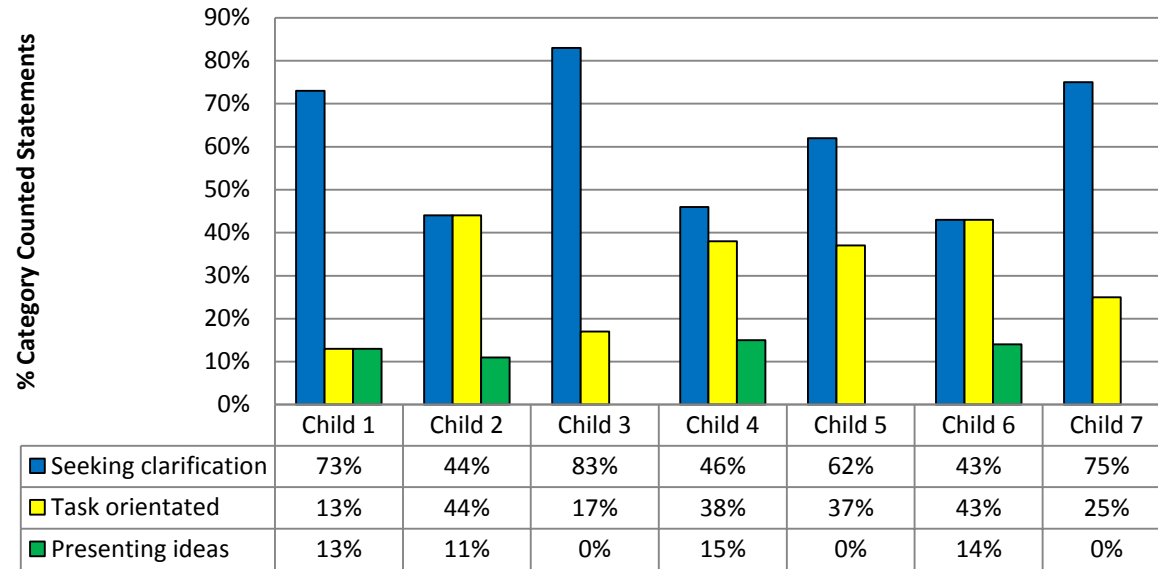
	Case 1					Case 2							Case 3			
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Seeking clarification	8 30%	18 46%	14 37%	13 32%	11 48%	11 73%	12 44%	5 83%	6 46%	5 62%	3 43%	3 75%	17 53%	32 64%	21 57%	15 29%
Task orientation	14 52%	15 38%	20 53%	14 58%	12 52%	2 13%	12 44%	1 17%	5 38%	3 37%	3 43%	1 25%	15 47%	17 34%	13 35%	27 56%
Presenting ideas	5 18%	6 15%	4 10%	4 10%	0 0%	2 13%	3 11%	0 0%	2 15%	0 0%	1 14%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	3 8%	6 12%



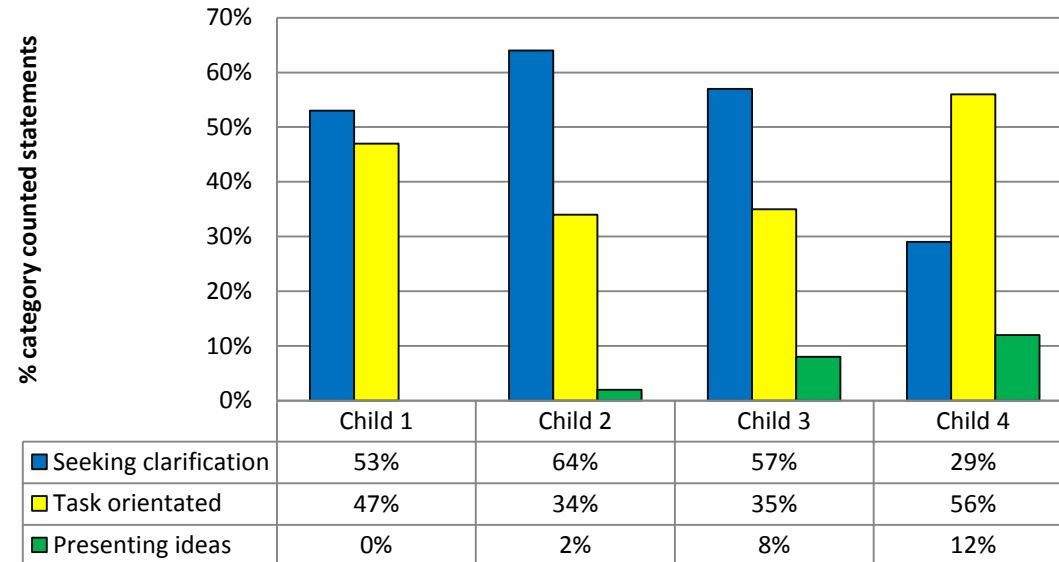
## Case 1: Question category analysis



## Case 2: Category question analysis



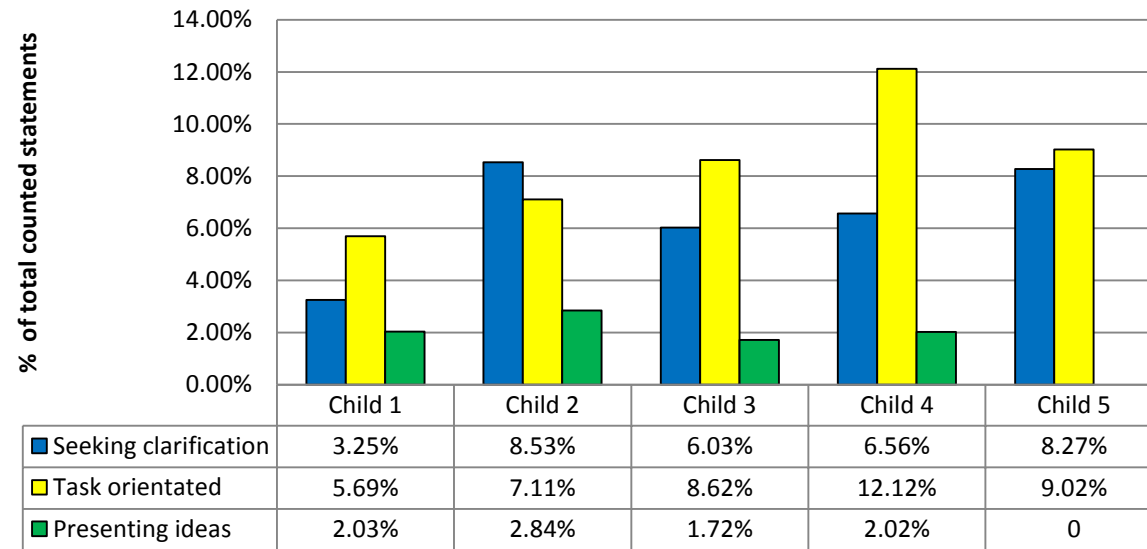
### Case 3: Category question analysis



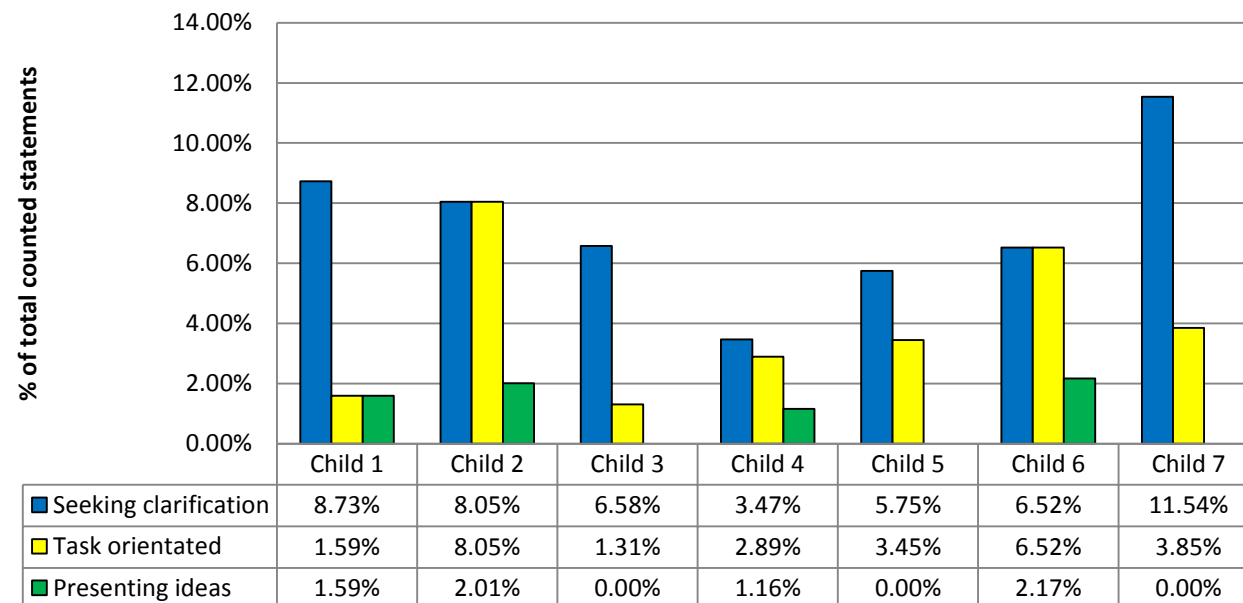
## Question analysis

	Case 1					Case 2							Case 3			
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Seeking clarification	8 3.25%	18 8.53%	14 6.03%	13 6.56%	11 8.27%	11 8.73%	12 8.05%	5 6.58%	6 3.47%	5 5.75%	3 6.52%	3 11.54%	17 7.33%	32 13.22%	21 10.94%	15 4.76%
Task orientation	14 5.69%	15 7.11%	20 8.62%	14 12.12%	12 9.02%	2 1.59%	12 8.05%	1 1.31%	5 2.89%	3 3.45%	3 6.52%	1 3.85%	15 6.46%	17 7.02%	13 6.77%	27 8.57%
Presenting ideas	5 2.03%	6 2.84%	4 1.72%	4 2.02%	0 0.00%	2 1.59%	3 2.01%	0 0.00%	2 1.16%	0 0.00%	1 2.17%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 0.41%	3 1.56%	6 1.90%

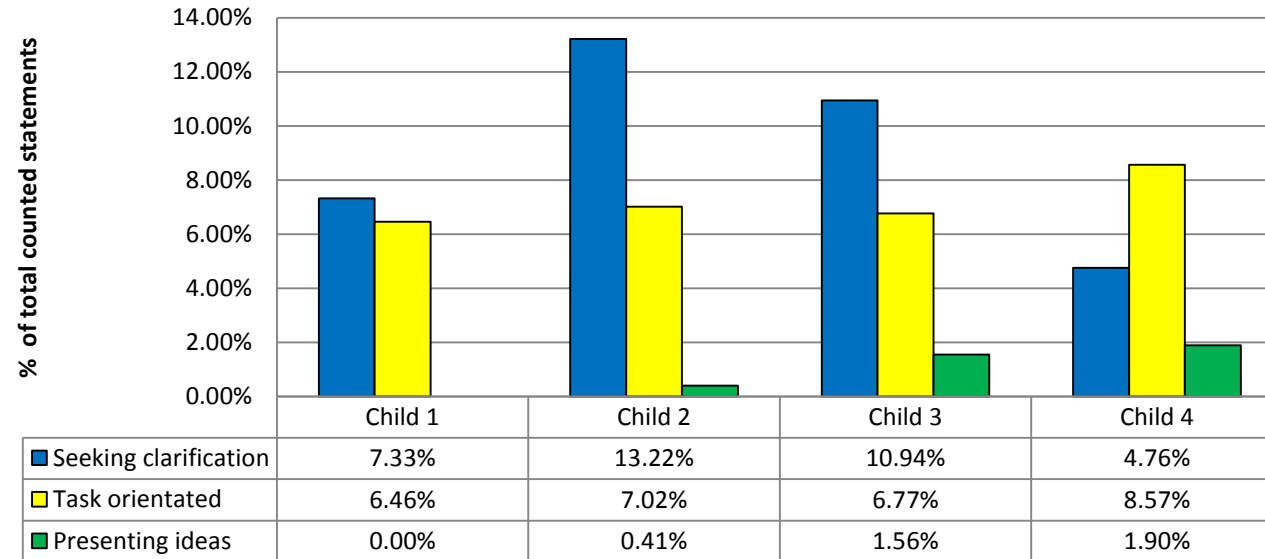
## Case 1: Category question analysis



## Case 2: Category question analysis



### Case 3: Category question analysis

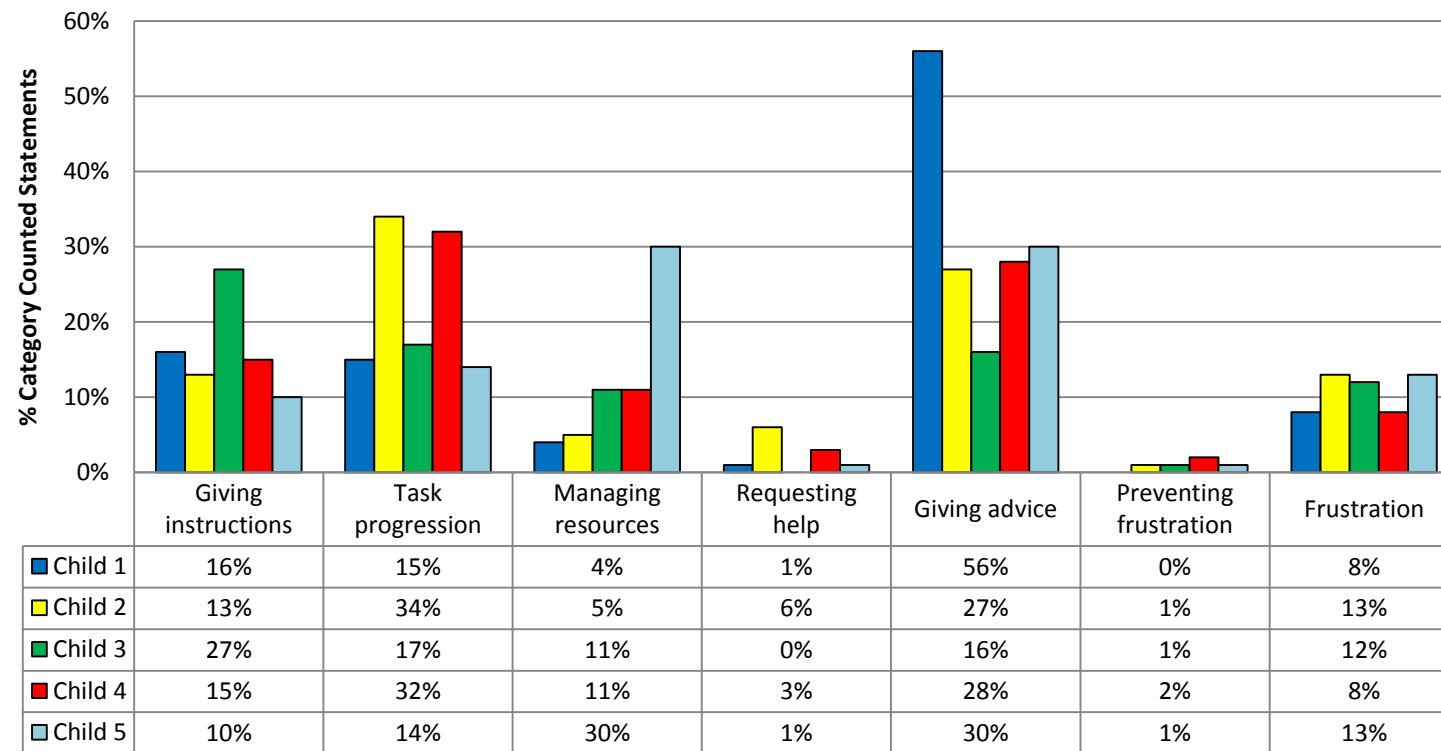


## Category task progression analysis

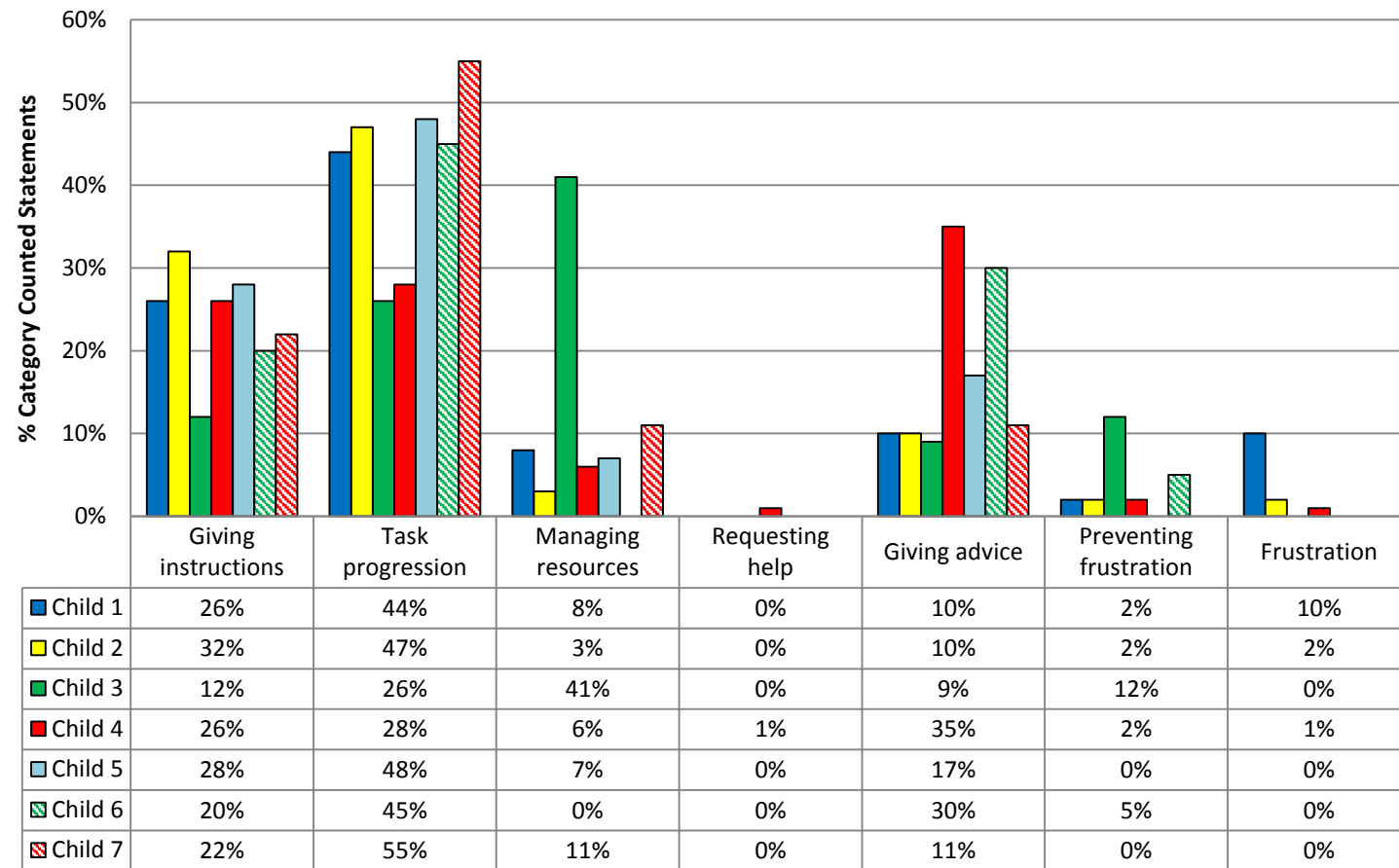
	Case 1					Case 2					Case 3					
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Giving instructions	27 16%	13 13%	28 27%	15 15%	8 10%	16 26%	19 32%	4 12%	30 26%	12 28%	4 20%	2 22%	32 26%	28 27%	13 14%	28 16%
Task progression	25 15%	33 34%	34 17%	31 32%	11 14%	27 44%	28 47%	9 26%	32 28%	20 48%	9 45%	5 55%	37 30%	45 44%	40 43%	53 31%
Managing resources	7 4%	5 5%	11 11%	11 11%	23 30%	5 8%	2 3%	14 41%	7 6%	3 7%	0 0%	1 11%	36 29%	8 8%	11 12%	10 6%
Requesting help	1 1%	6 6%	0 0%	3 3%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 2%	3 3%	2 2%	1 1%
Giving advice	94 56%	26 27%	16 16%	28 28%	23 30%	6 10%	9 10%	3 9%	40 35%	7 17%	6 30%	1 11%	7 6%	8 8%	19 21%	72 42%
Preventing frustration	0 0%	1 1%	1 1%	2 2%	1 1%	1 2%	1 2%	4 12%	2 2%	0 0%	1 5%	0 0%	2 2%	4 4%	0 0%	3 2%
Frustration	14 8%	18 13%	12 12%	8 8%	10 13%	6 10%	1 2%	0 0%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 6%	7 7%	7 8%	3 2%



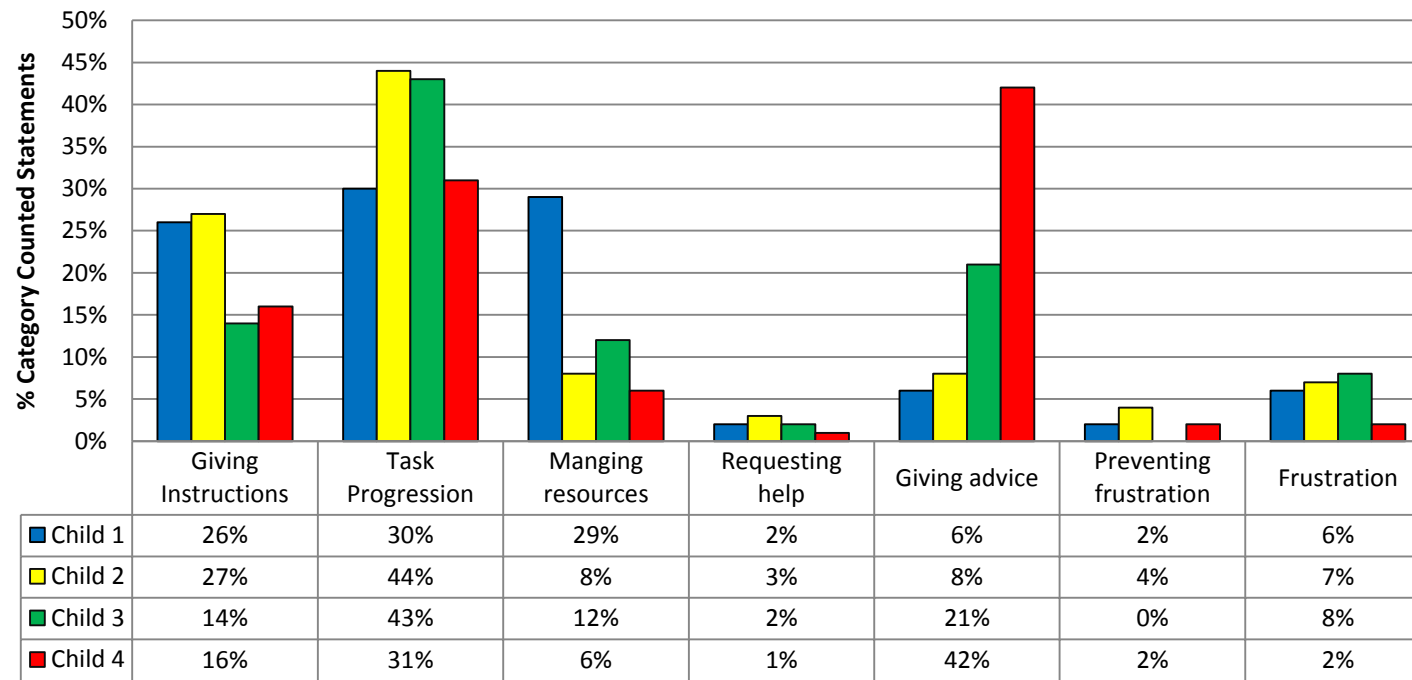
## CASE 1: Task progression analysis



## Case 2: Task progression analysis



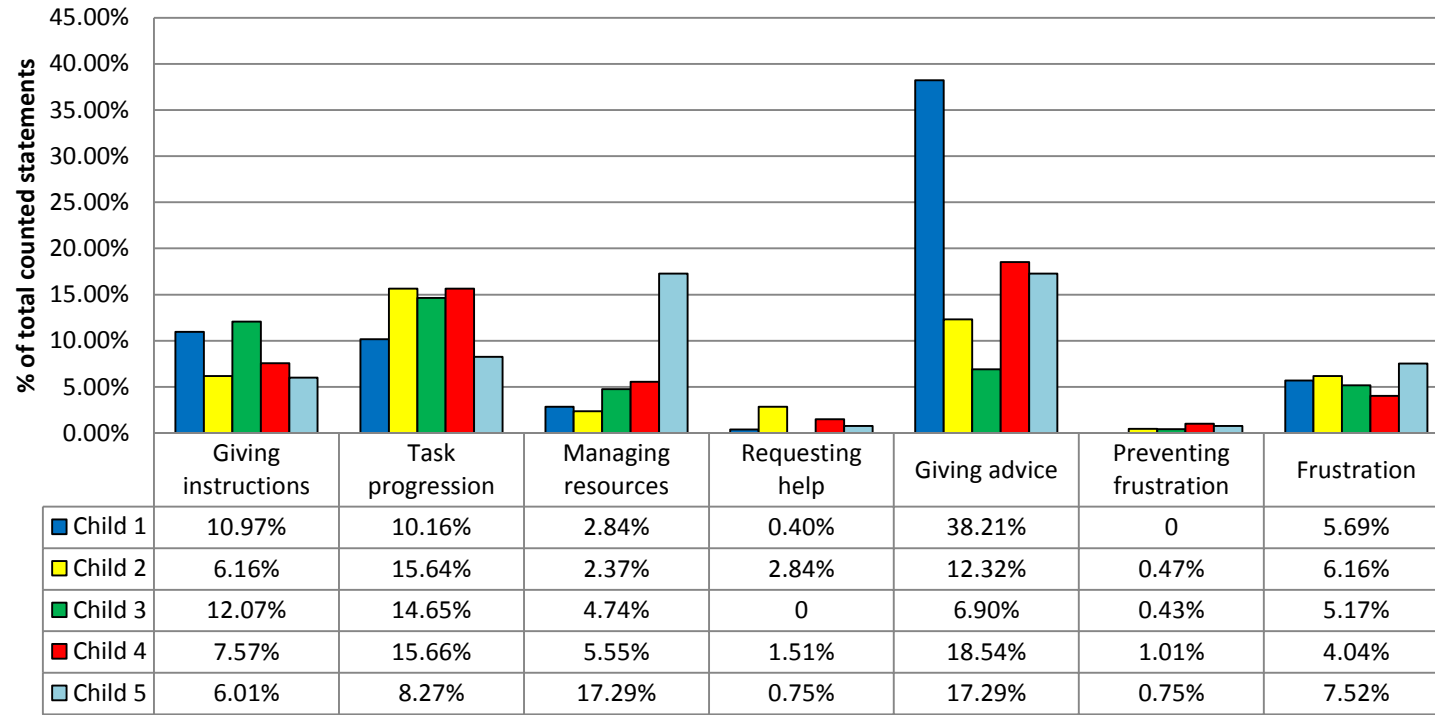
### Case 3: Task progression analysis (category)



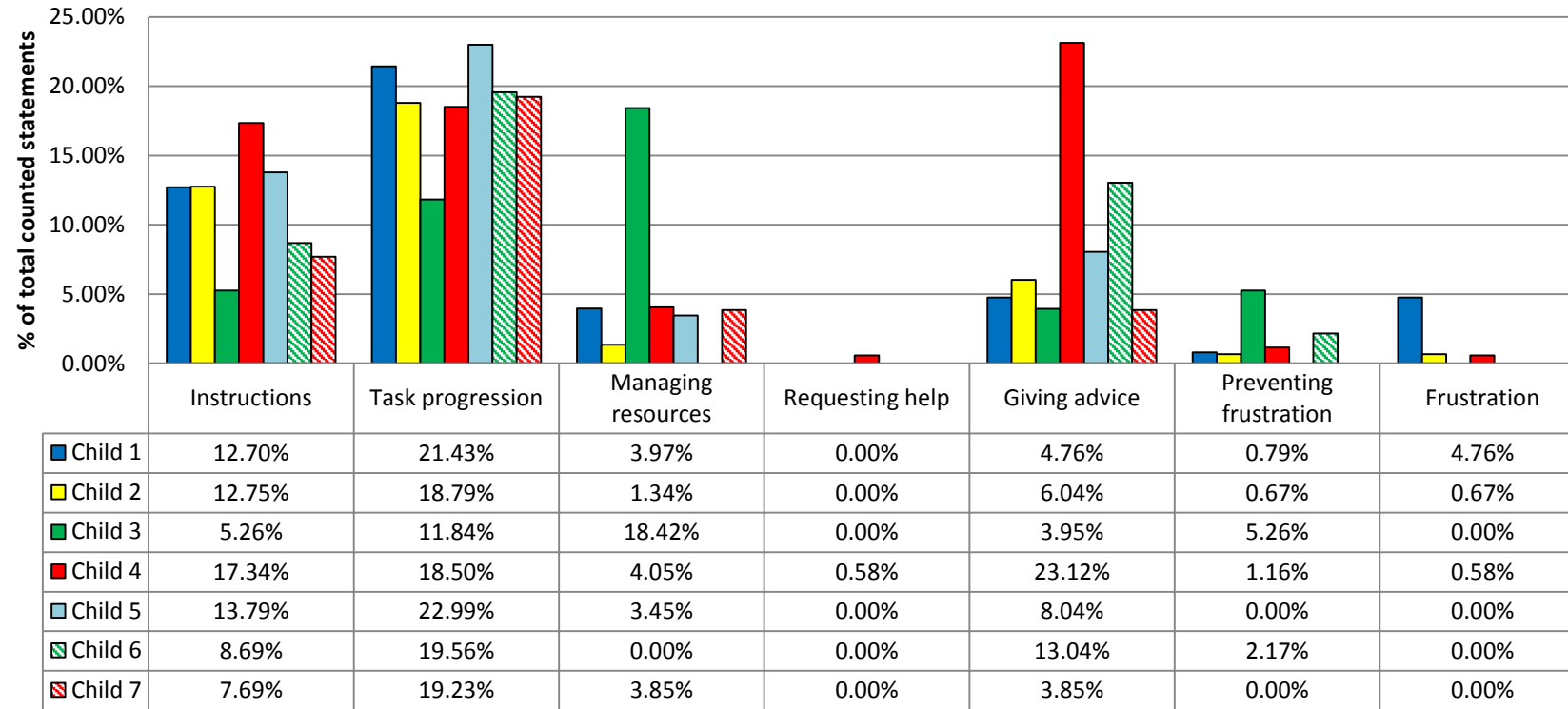
## Task progression analysis

	Case 1					Case 2					Case 3					
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6	Child 7	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Giving instructions	27 10.97%	13 6.16%	28 12.07%	15 7.57%	8 6.01%	16 12.70%	19 12.75%	4 5.26%	30 17.34%	12 13.79%	4 8.69%	2 7.69%	32 13.80%	28 11.57%	13 6.77%	28 8.89%
Task progression	25 10.16%	33 15.64%	34 14.65%	31 15.66%	11 8.27%	27 21.43%	28 18.79%	9 11.84%	32 18.50%	20 22.99%	9 19.56%	5 19.23%	37 15.95%	45 18.59%	40 20.83%	53 16.82%
Managing resources	7 2.84%	5 2.37%	11 4.74%	11 5.55%	23 17.29%	5 3.97%	2 1.34%	14 18.42%	7 4.05%	3 3.45%	0 0.00%	1 3.85%	36 15.52%	8 3.30%	11 5.73%	10 3.17%
Requesting help	1 0.40%	6 2.84%	0 0.00%	3 1.51%	1 0.75%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 0.58%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 1.29%	3 1.24%	2 1.04%	1 0.32%
Giving advice	94 38.21%	26 12.32%	16 6.90%	28 18.54%	23 17.29%	6 4.76%	9 6.04%	3 3.95%	40 23.12%	7 8.04%	6 13.04%	1 3.85%	7 3.02%	8 3.30%	19 9.89%	72 22.86%
Preventing frustration	0 0.00%	1 0.47%	1 0.43%	2 1.01%	1 0.75%	1 0.79%	1 0.67%	4 5.26%	2 1.16%	0 0.00%	1 2.17%	0 0.00%	2 0.86%	4 1.65%	0 0.00%	3 0.95%
Frustration	14 5.69%	18 6.16%	12 5.17%	8 4.04%	10 7.52%	6 4.76%	1 0.67%	0 0.00%	1 0.58%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	7 3.02%	7 2.89%	7 3.64%	3 0.95%

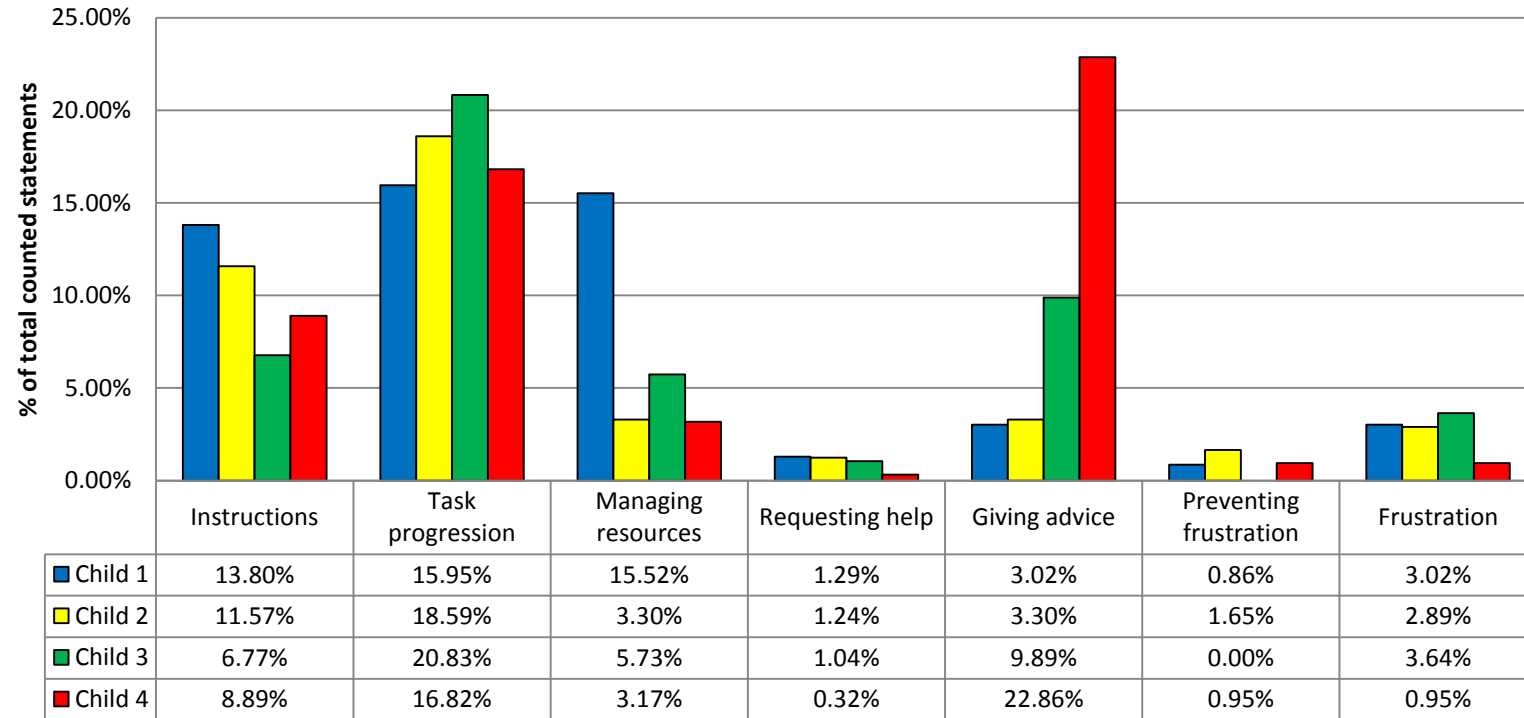
## Case 1: Task progression analysis



## Case 2: Task progression analysis

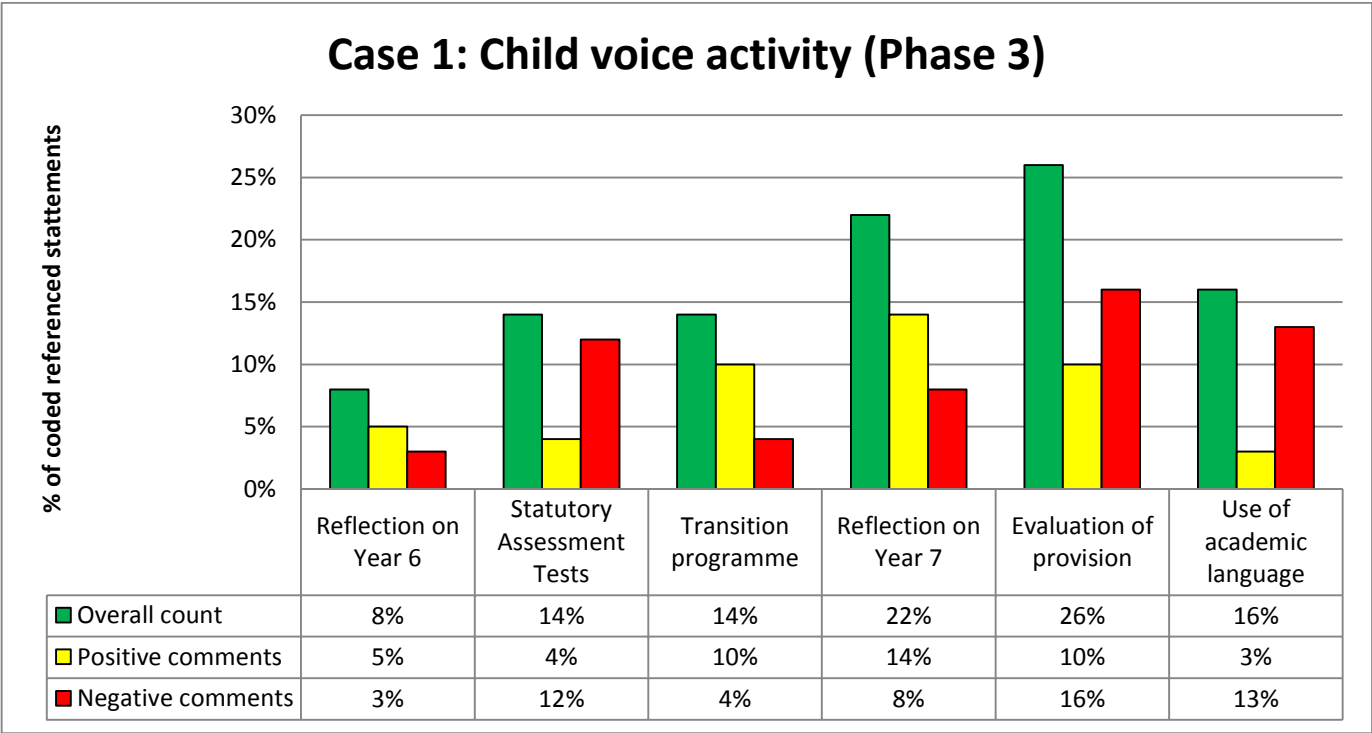


### Case 3: Task progression analysis



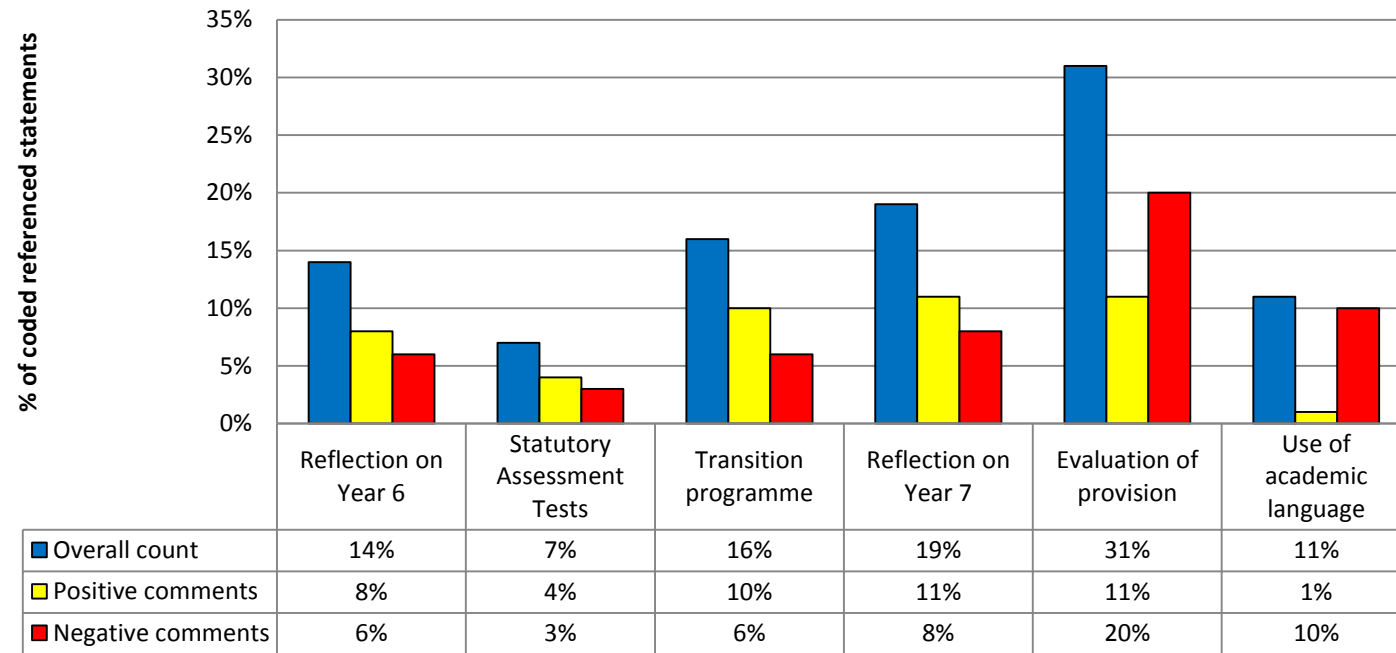
Appendix 3

Graphs generated from child voice activity

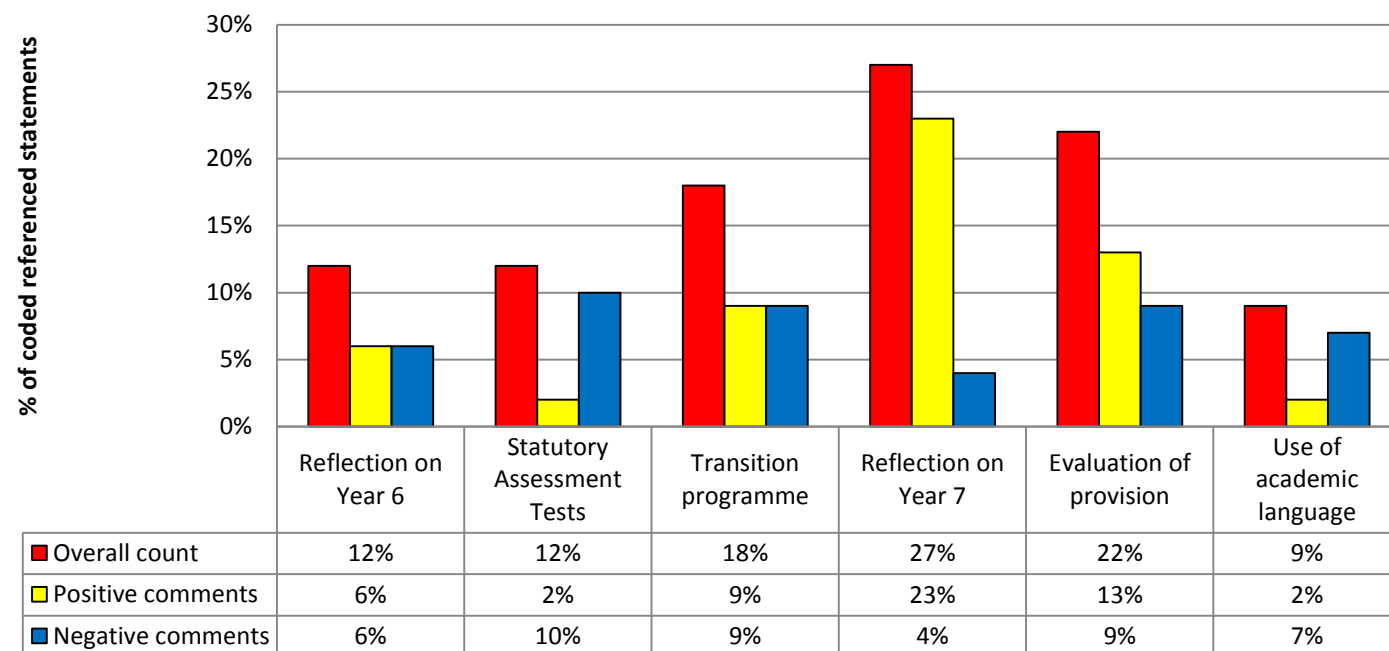




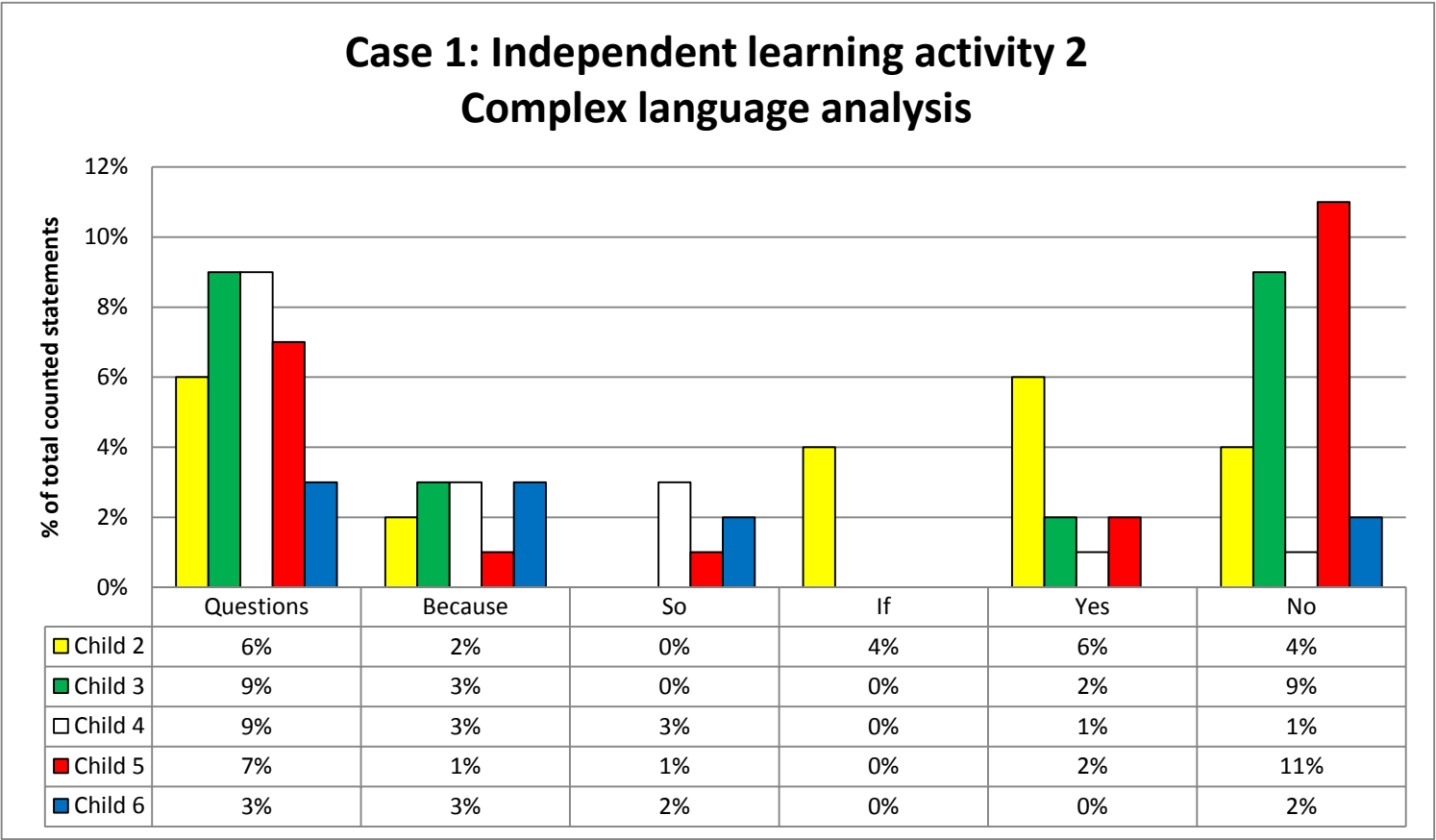
## Case 2: Child voice activity (Phase 3)



### Case 3: Child voice activity (Phase 3)

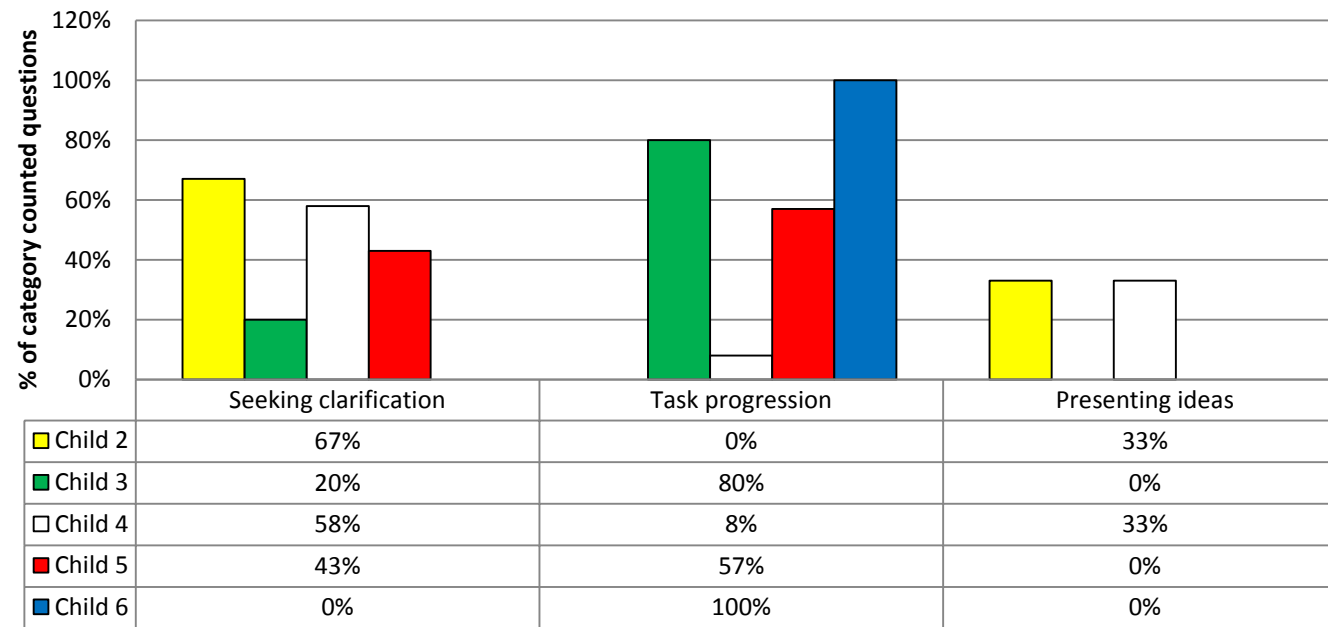


Case 1: Independent learning activity 2 – the tower



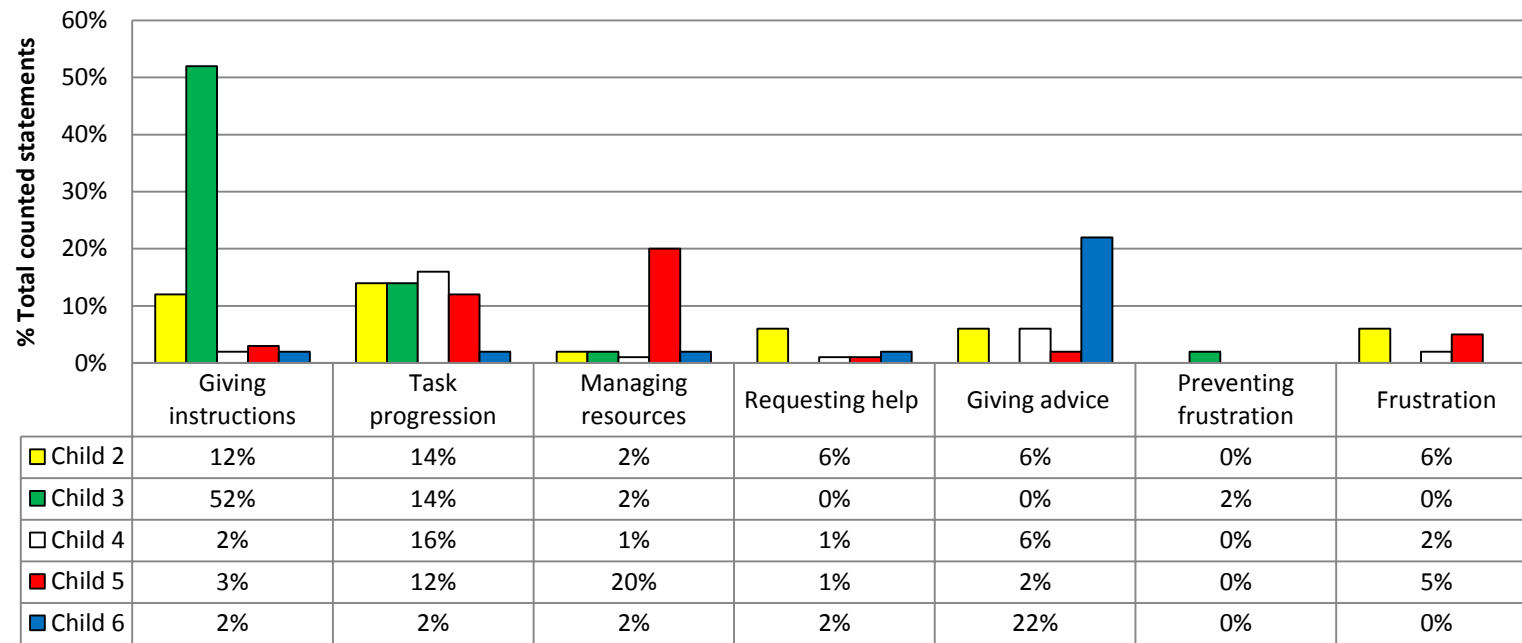
## Case 1: Independent learning activity 2

### Question category analysis

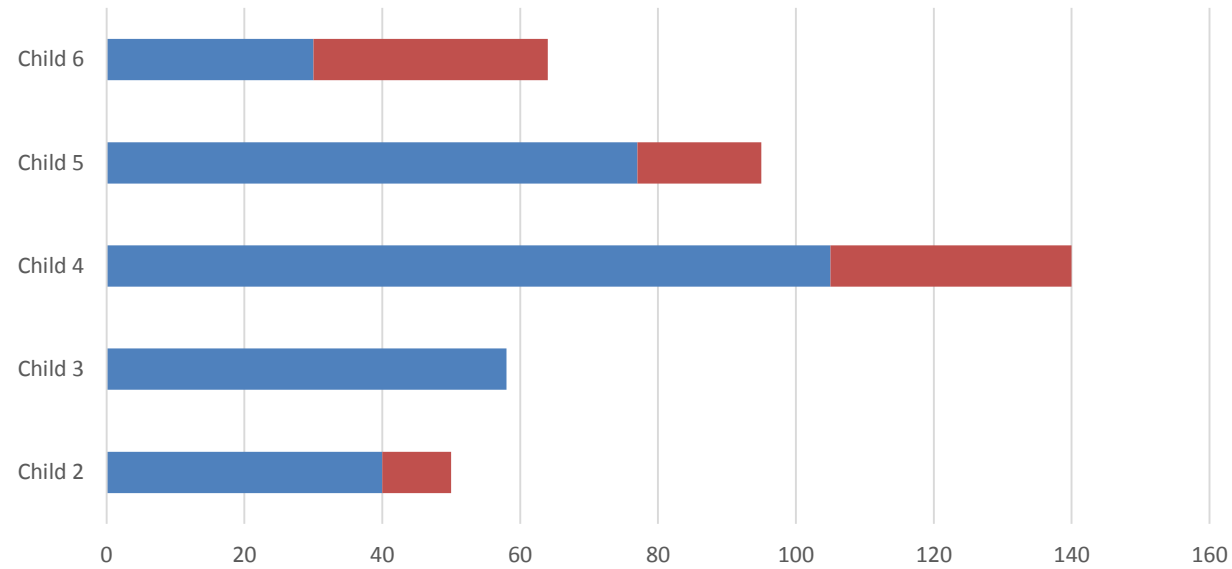


## Case 1: Independent learning activity 2

### Task progression analysis

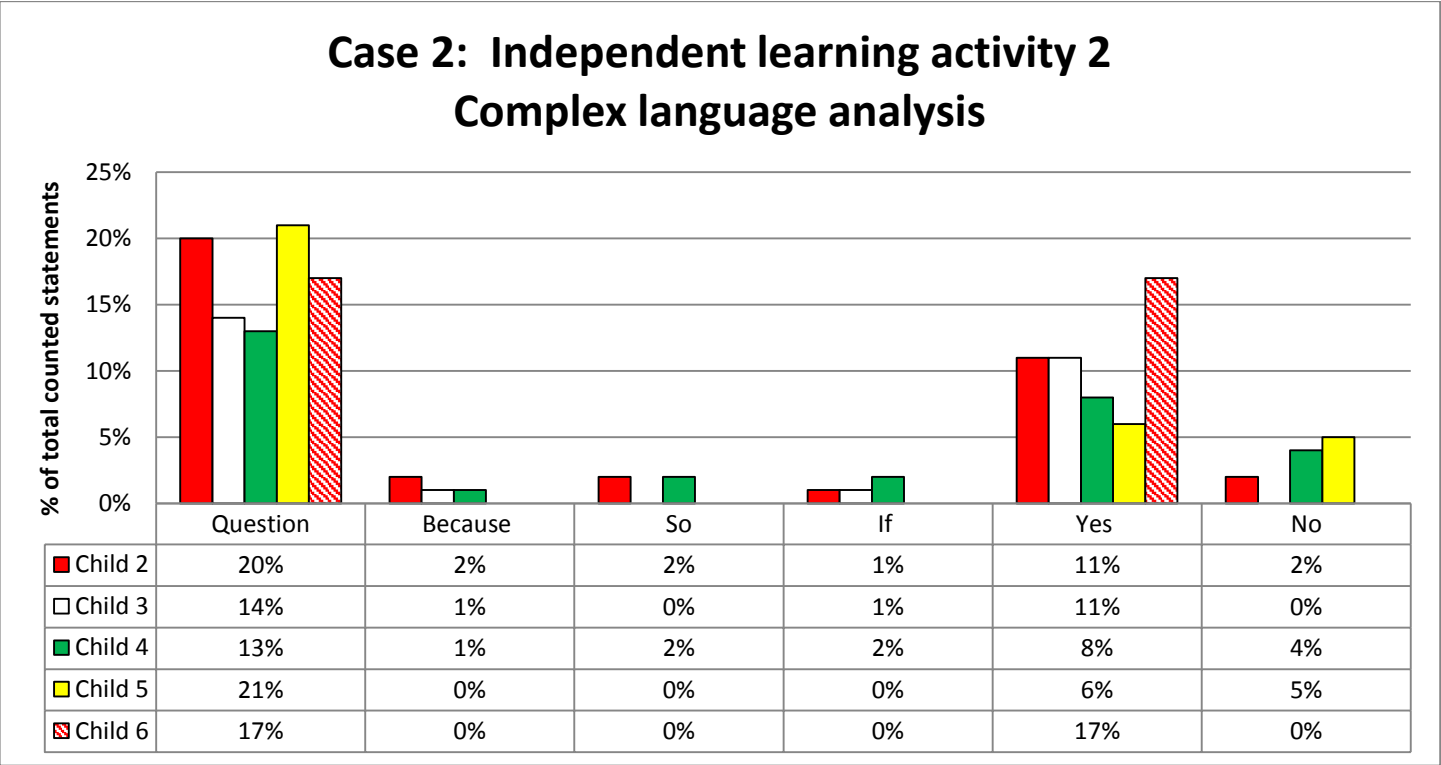


Case 1: Independent learning activity 2  
On- and off-task comments



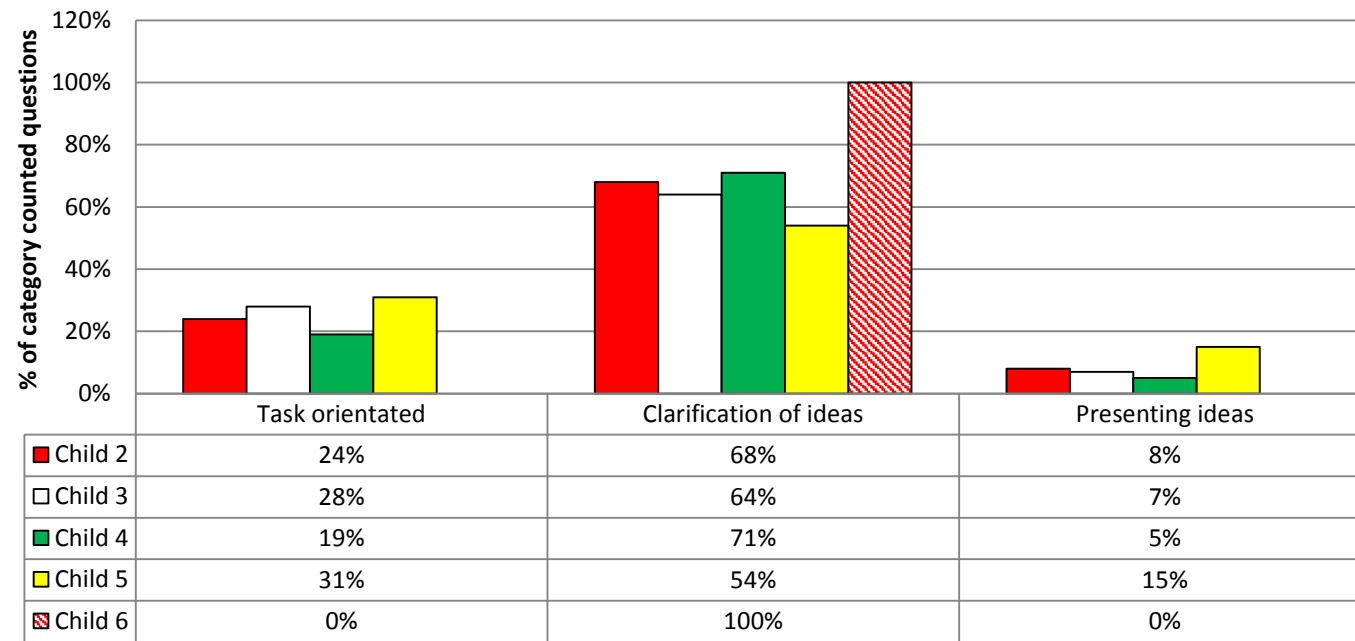
	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
On-task comments	40	58	105	77	30
Off-task comments	10	0	35	18	34

Case 2: Independent learning activity 2 – the tower



## Case 2: Independent learning activity 2

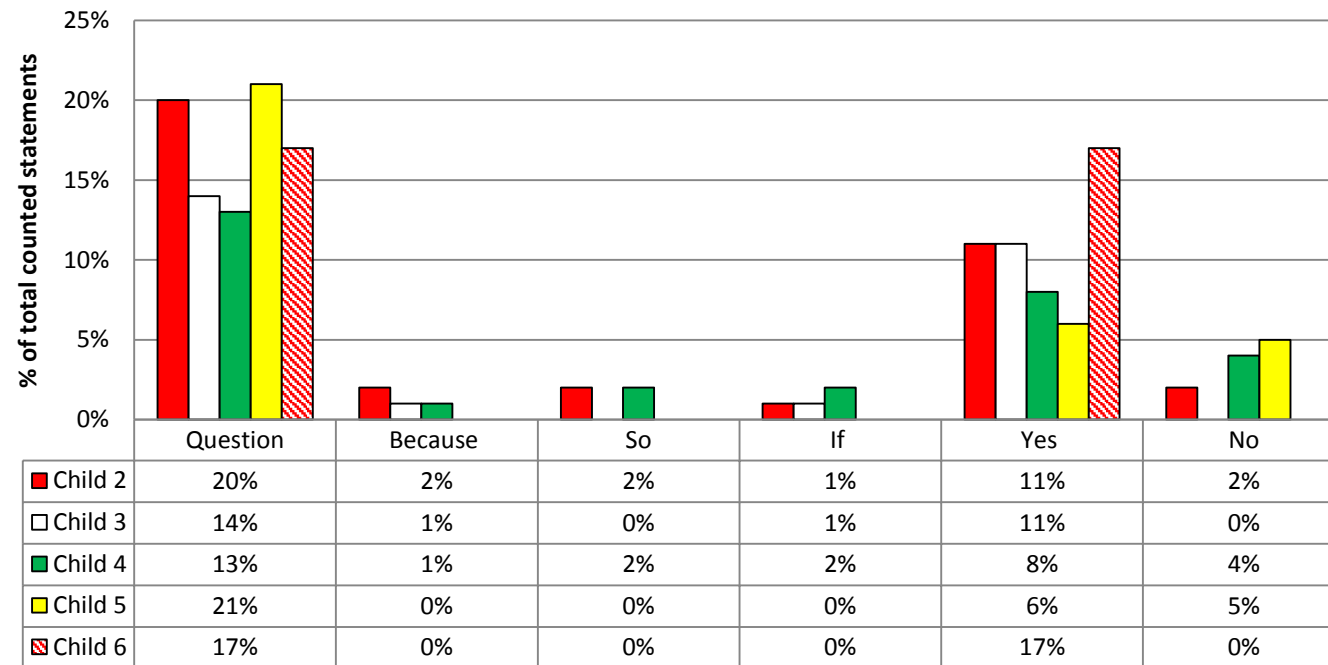
### Question analysis



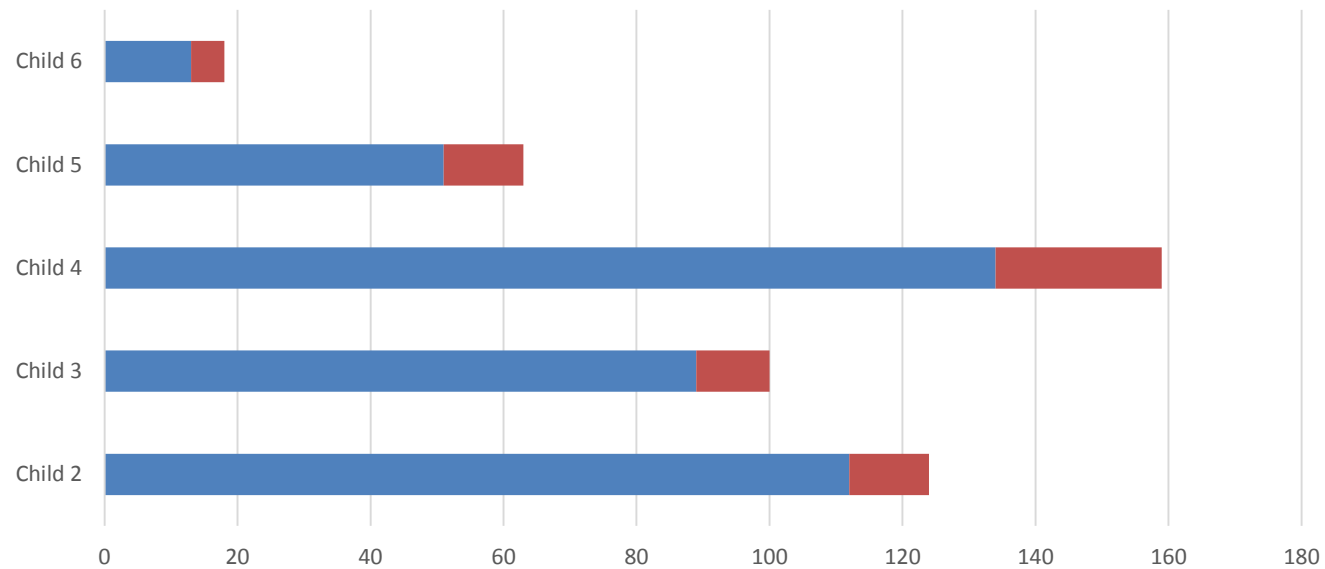


## Case 2: Independent learning activity 2

### Complex language analysis

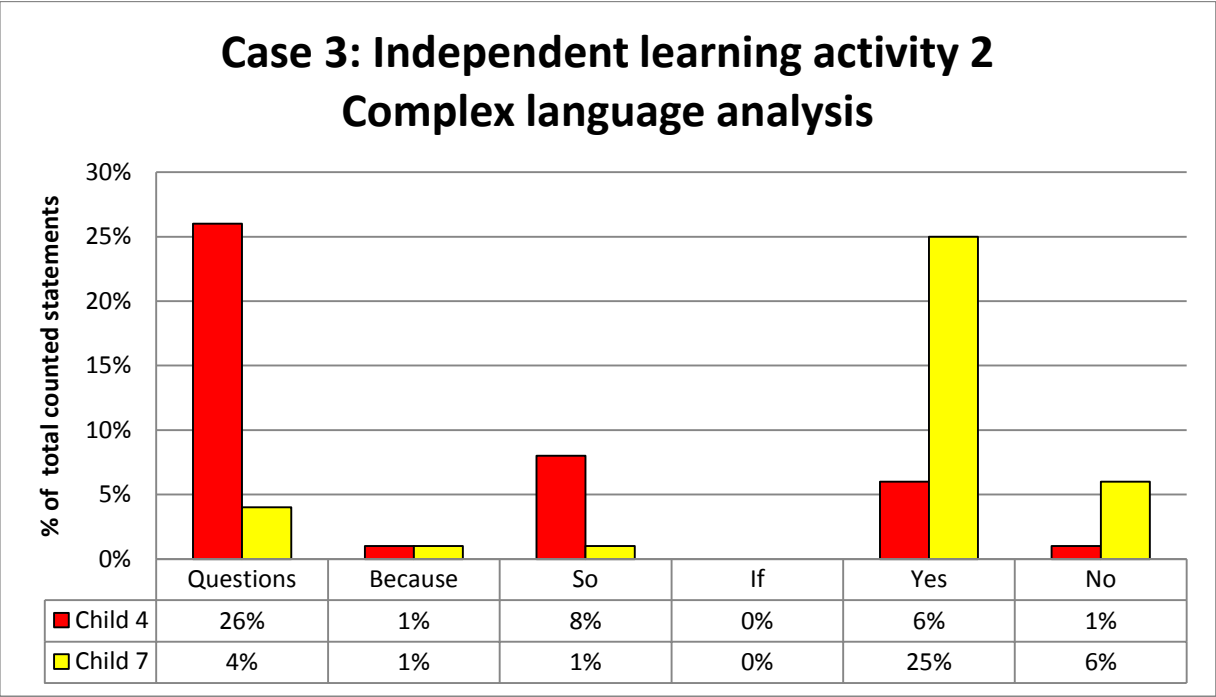


# Case 2: Independent learning activity 2 On- and off-task comments



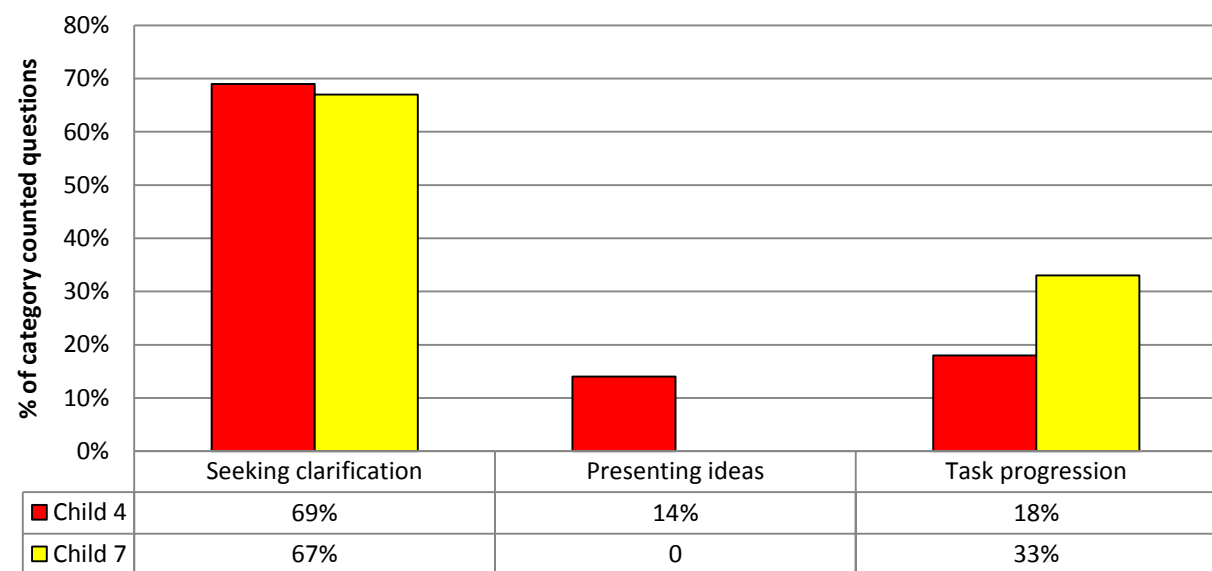
	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5	Child 6
On-task comments	112	89	134	51	13
Off-task comments	12	11	25	12	5

Case 3: Independent learning activity 2 – the tower

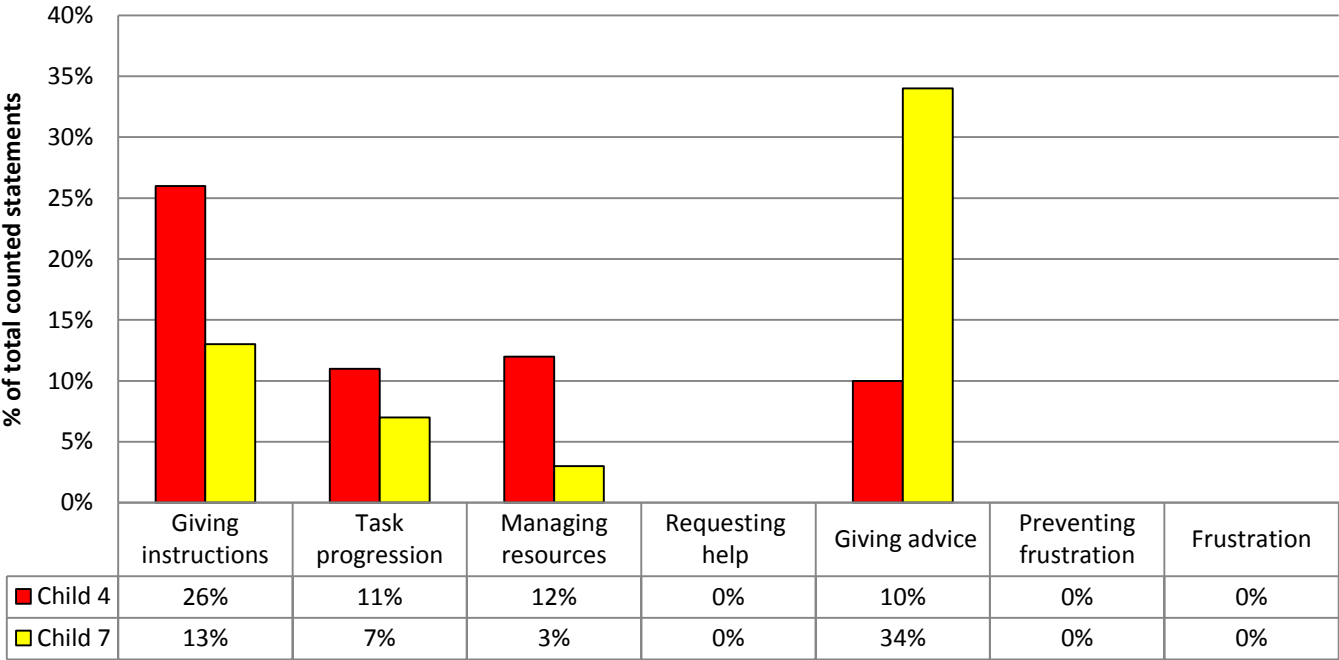


### Case 3: Independent learning activity 2

#### Question analysis

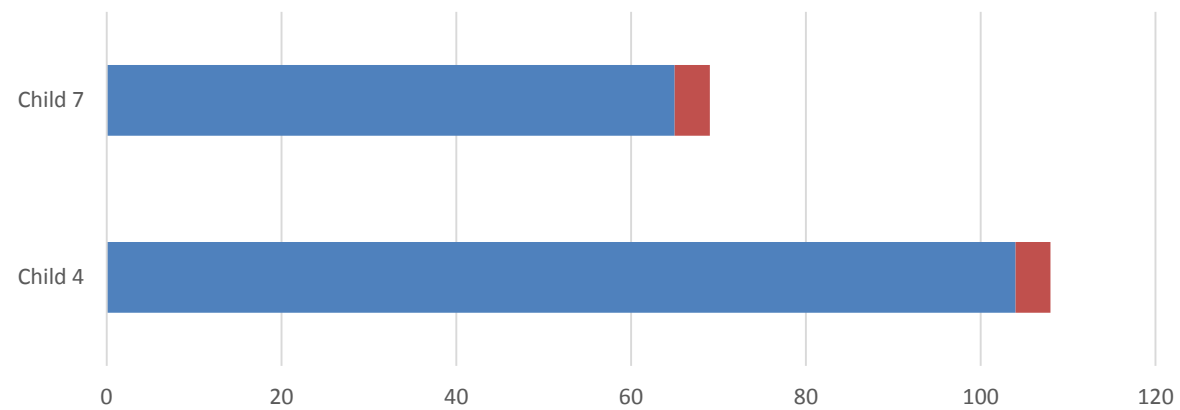


# **Case 3: Independent learning activity 2** **Task progression analysis**



### Case 3: Independent learning activity 2

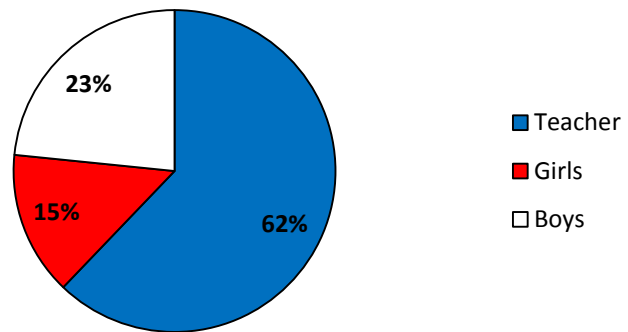
#### On- and off-task comments



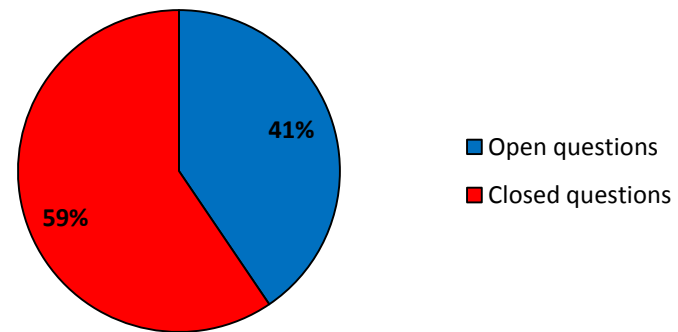
	Child 4	Child 7
■ On task comments	104	65
■ Off task comments	4	4

**Phase 3: Lesson observation (Drama)**

**Lesson observation 1  
Distribution of classroom talk**

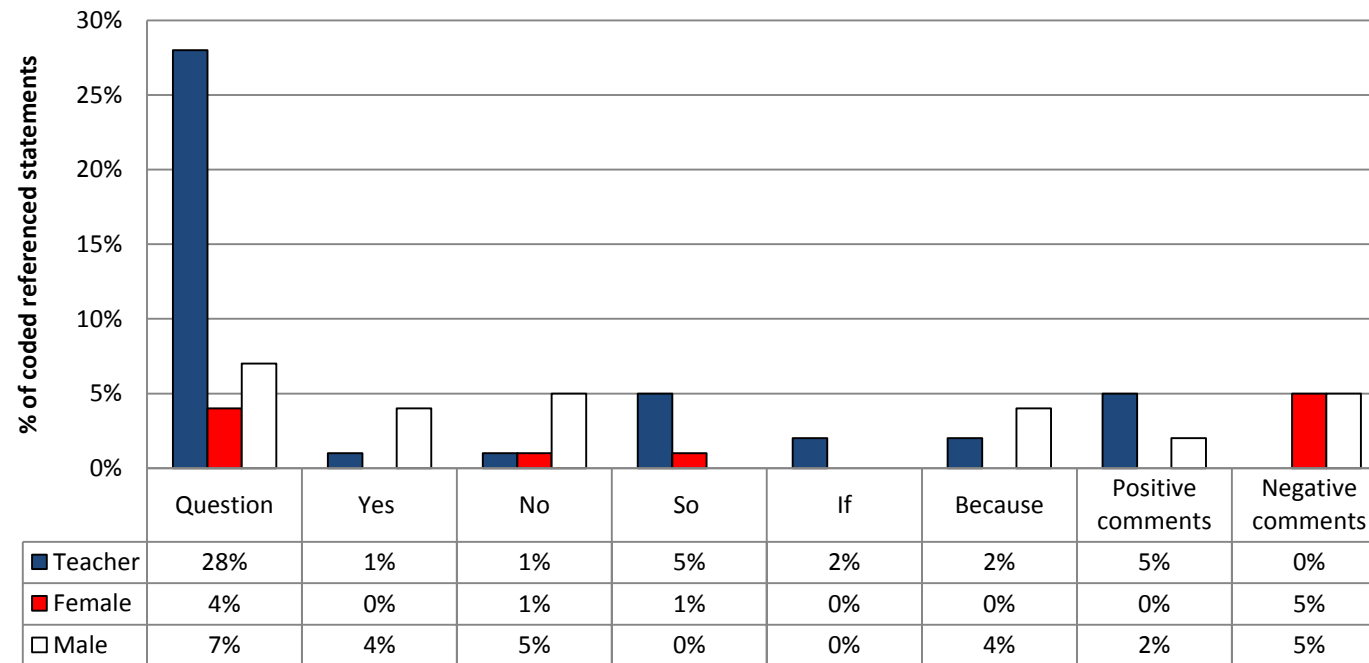


**Lesson observation 1  
Open and closed questions**



## Lesson observation 1

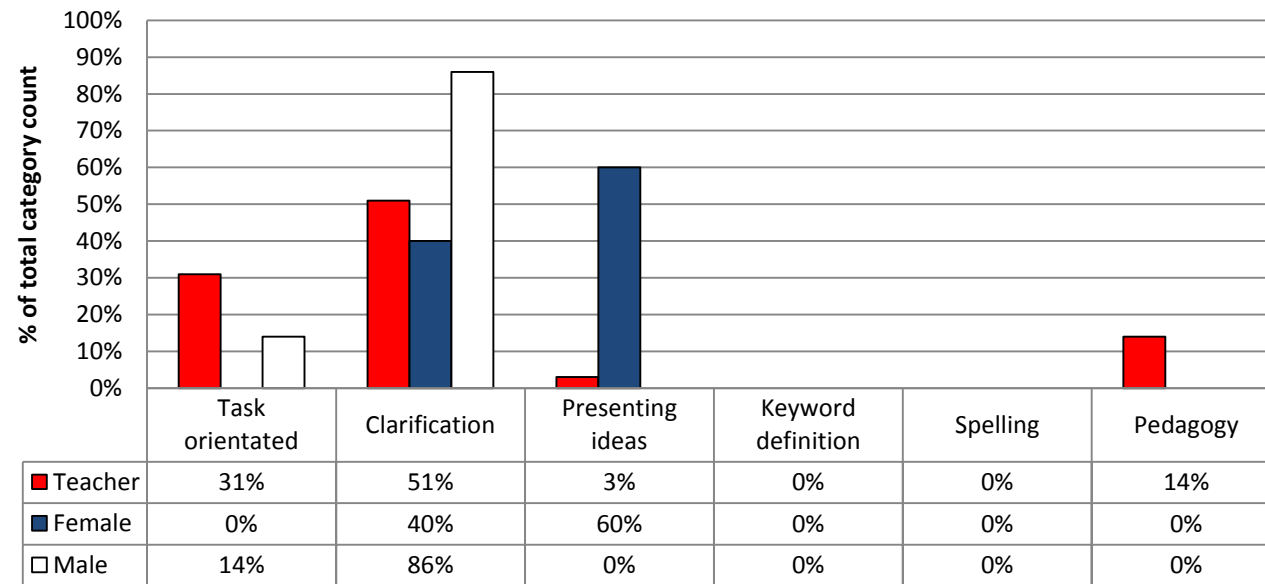
### Complex language analysis





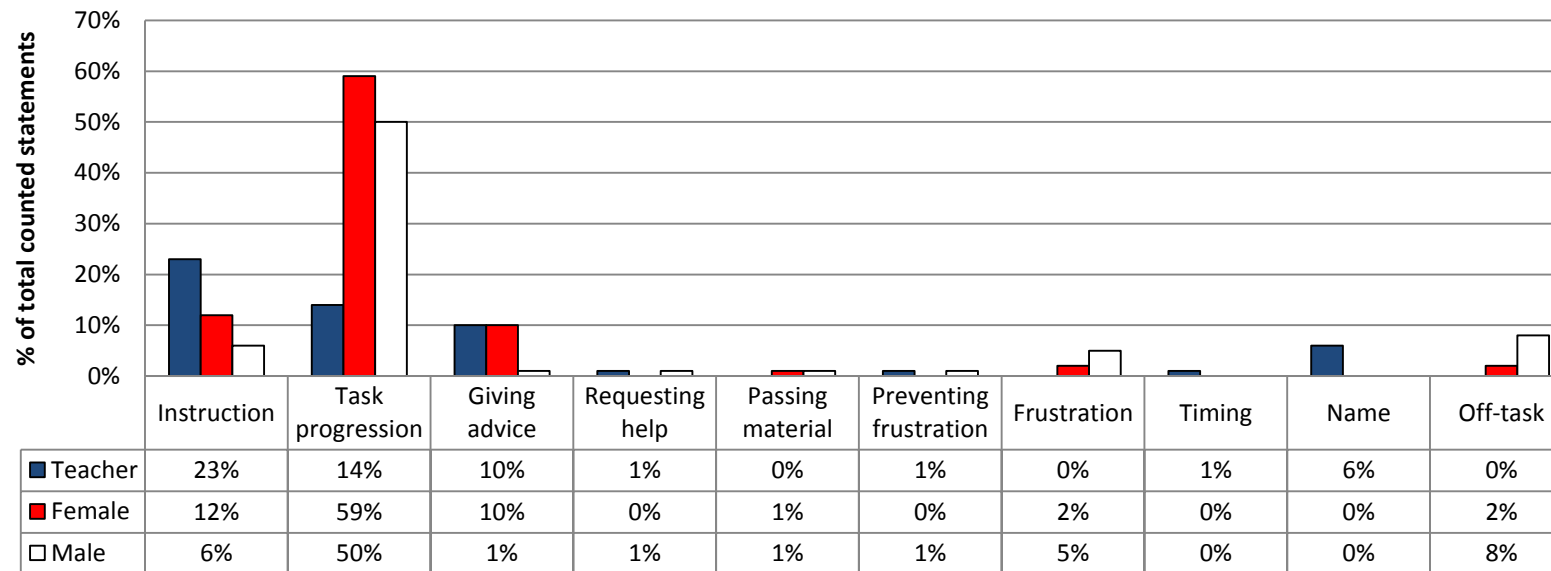
## Lesson observation 1

### Question analysis



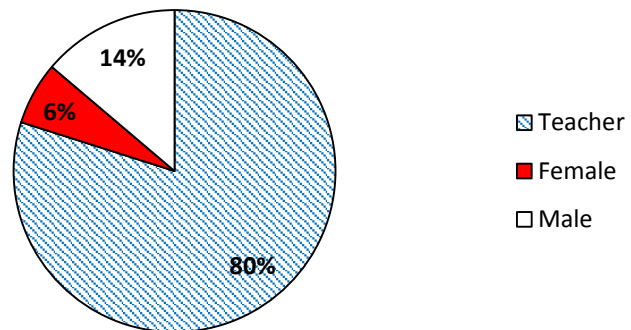
## Lesson observation 1

### Task progression analysis

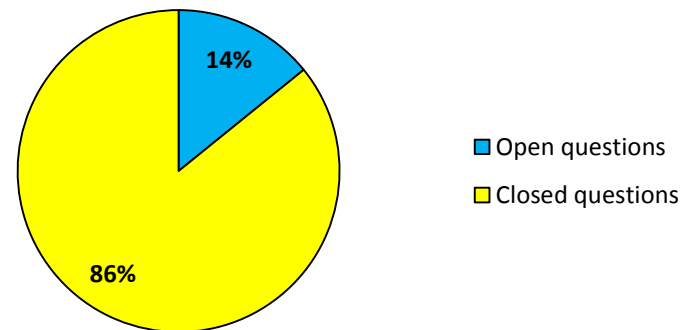


**Phase 3: Lesson observation (Mathematics)**

**Lesson observation 2  
Distribution of talk**

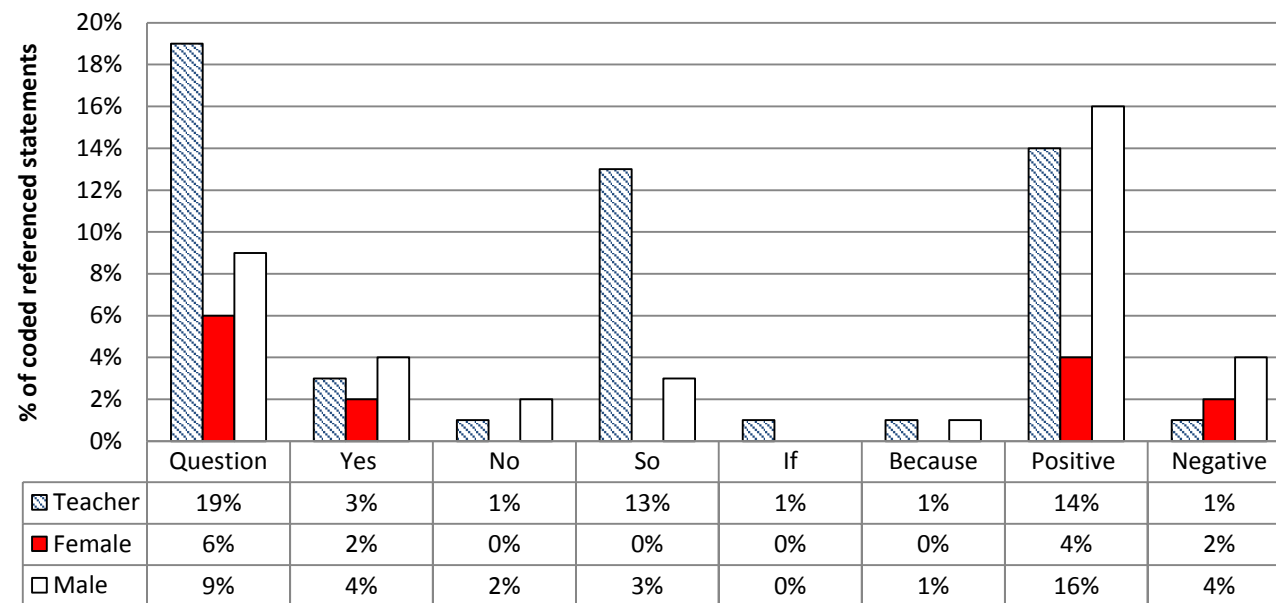


**Lesson observation 2  
Open and closed questions**



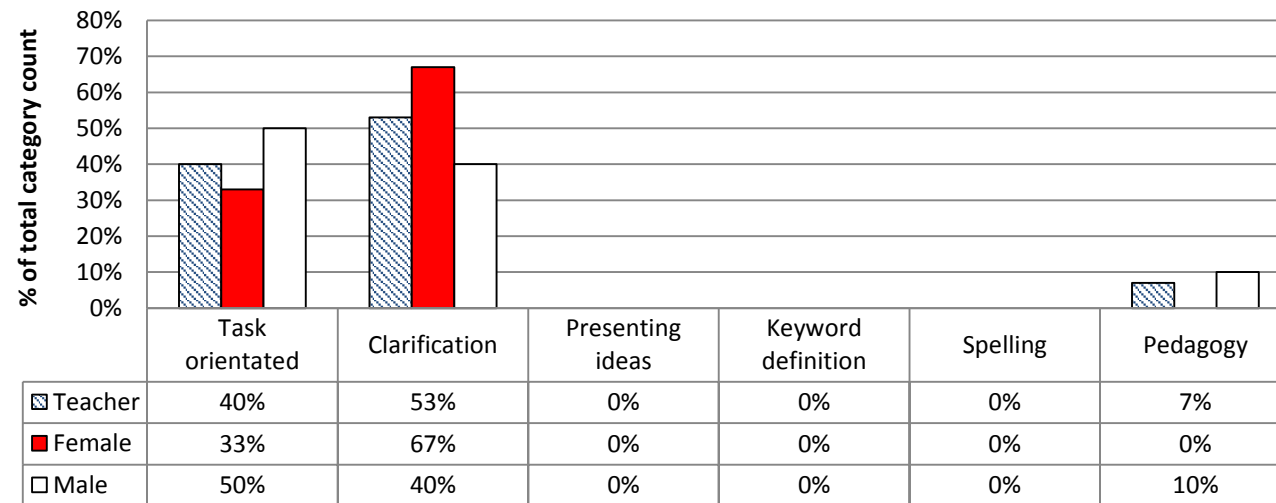
## Lesson observation 2

### Complex language analysis



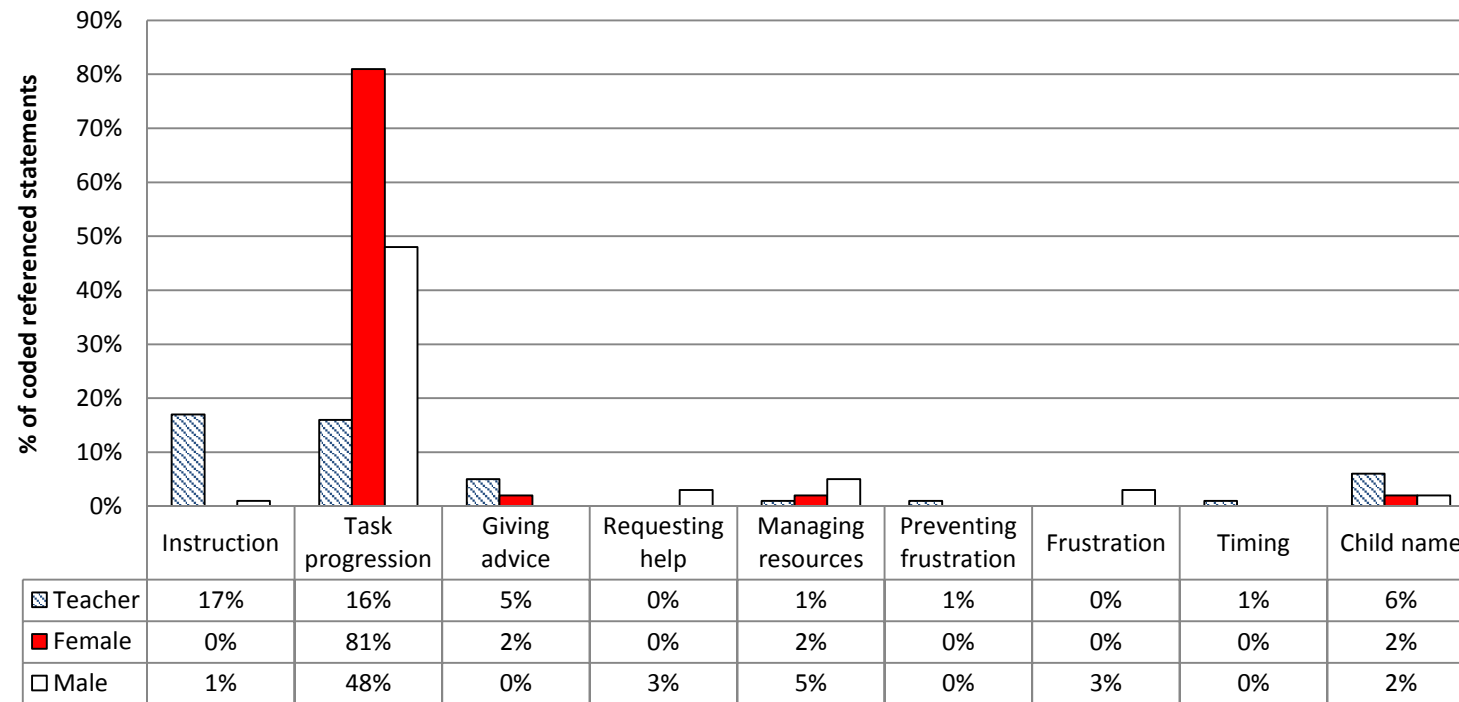
## Lesson observation 2

### Question analysis



## Case 2/3: Lesson observation 2

### Task progression analysis



## Appendix 4

### Similarities and differences between Phases 2 and 3 independent learning activities and lesson observations

#### Independent learning activity

##### Phase 2: Raft activity

<b>Grouping:</b> Ratified sample groups as detailed in Chapter 4	<b>Time:</b> 30 minutes
<b>Learning outcome:</b> To construct a raft-like vessel that is decorated and floats for a sustainable amount of time	
<b>Resources:</b> A variety of craft materials, yoghurt pots, straws, sellotape and PVA glue	
<b>Guidance given:</b> None	

##### Phase 3: Tower activity

<b>Grouping:</b> Ratified sample groups as detailed in Chapter 4	<b>Time:</b> 30 minutes
<b>Learning outcome:</b> To construct a stable tower using limited resources	
<b>Resources:</b> Spaghetti, Blu-tac and sellotape	
<b>Guidance given:</b> None	

## Case 1

	Teacher experience Years	Grouping	Learning objectives/lesson sequence
Phase 2	5+	Small group 2-5 children	<p><b>LO:</b> Understand business planning and costing (In for a penny, in for a pound)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enter and collect work folder and necessary resources. Teacher introduces lesson and possible directions for each individual group project. Teacher revisits terminology by Q&amp;A definitions and discussion. Each group develops a work plan and schedule for the lesson.</li> <li>Open-ended groups task with each group planning, costing and discussing ideas, focus being costing of resources and selecting cheapest ingredients.</li> <li>End of lesson children clear resources.</li> </ol>

	Similarity	Difference
Lesson observation	N/A	N/A
Learning activity	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Dialogue categories were consistent throughout the task. No movement between these with each contributing to the final result.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Dialogue categories identical to those of Phase 2. Children adapted to categories, but did not develop them as with Phase 2.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children worked well as a group and each contributed to the raft.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> By the end of the tower activity, the children separated into three distinct groups. At first to make a section of the tower, by the end making 3 towers.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Despite the raft not floating, the children produced a good, decorated raft.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> The quality of work was not as good as Phase 2. The towers were poorly structured and with little planning going into each.</p>



		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> There was wastage of resources, but the majority of resources used were discussed whilst in use, then undone creating waste.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> A lot of resources were wasted and not thought out logically. Lots of breakages through poor concentration on the task.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Good discussion of strategy and next steps. Evidence of planning using prior knowledge of rafts to support decisions.</p> <p><b>Phase 2:</b> Initial planning changed to off-task talk comparing teachers, classes, students and schools.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Entire time given was used effectively to complete the task. Pride in its completion.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Time was not used effectively, as concentration lapsed.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Broad range of vocabulary used associated with the task, preparation and completion. Evidence of open questions, giving advice, giving and receiving instruction.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Some instruction given, but very little advice. More like an extra-curricular activity with 'chat' developing through task. Limited evidence of instruction and advice. Only 2 members of the group attempted to keep the group focused.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children developed a good understanding of what was required through conversation cues, scaffolding of ideas and a wide range of Socratic and <i>magistral</i> dialogue.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Limited understanding of what was required with little dialogue to solve initial problems and development of the task.</p>
<b>Student voice</b>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children felt as if they were being prepared well for transfer.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Children felt as though their teachers prepared them well, particularly with personal and social aspect of transfer.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children thought that teachers were preparing them well academically for secondary school, particularly with homework.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Children felt as though they could have been prepared better - particularly with homework. Homework was too narrow and more could have been set. A little haphazard with sanctions.</p>
	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children felt they were well prepared for SATs and that they could understand the benefits of them.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Children understood the benefits of SATs and that they had supported them in Year 7 tests (Music SATs), but could not understand why they had further tests on entry to secondary school. They questioned their secondary school's understanding of SATs.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children were enjoying a more 'relaxed' curriculum and described the teachers as being more enjoyable.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Some would have liked the SATs put back to July so they could carry on with their learning.</p>

	<b>Phase 2 to 3:</b> there is some curriculum discontinuity in which some of the work is repeated in Year 7, particularly in Maths where teachers are using this to benchmark the children.	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children thought their teachers used challenging vocabulary and that this supported their learning. Thus, their teacher had high expectations of them as learners.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Children stated that their secondary school teachers use 'sixth-form' language and that they cannot differentiate between Year 7s and sixth-form.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Inconsistent sanctions for homework and behaviour.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Consistency of sanctions, e.g. detentions for homework.</p>

## Case 2

### Detail of lesson

	Teacher experience (Years)	Grouping	Learning objectives/lesson sequence
<b>Phase 2</b>	10+	Individual and paired	<p><b>LO:</b> Use descriptive language to rewrite a traditional fairy tale (Cinderella)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enter and sit on carpet area. Q&amp;A discussion on where they are up to in rewriting Cinderella. Children share ideas using prompts from the teacher.</li> <li>Paired activity – children discuss their stories and developments with their partner using prompts learnt from teacher.</li> <li>Circle activity – children share their stories with class with key phrases repeated by teacher.</li> <li>Individual activity – children move to seating area to continue rewriting Cinderella in exercise books.</li> <li>Think break – children share paragraph with partner and possible developments.</li> <li>Children complete paragraph and tidy away.</li> </ol>
<b>Phase 3: Year 7 Home</b>	3-5	Individual	<p><b>LO:</b> To understand percentages using %, decimal and fractions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enter classroom in established seating plan. Starter activity recapping previous lesson on percentage, decimal and fractions. Children encouraged to show their answers on the whiteboard. Q&amp;A session on percentages.</li> </ol>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of simple percentage questions on the whiteboard for children to work out. Again, students encouraged sharing their answers on whiteboard and class applaud when correct.</li> <li>Series of questions on the whiteboard for children to solve individually. Differentiation using Red, Amber, Green categories of questions that gradually develop level of difficulty.</li> <li>Objectives set for next lesson.</li> </ol>
<b>Phase 3: Year 7 Drama</b>	1-3	Small group 3-5 children	<p><b>LO:</b> Development of storyline</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enter classroom and sit in a circle. Introductory game played demanding class group skills, concentration and trust – ‘breaking the code.’</li> <li>Class develop a story structuring introduction, middle and conclusion. Each child contributes verbally by adding a sentence.</li> <li>Q&amp;A analysing key components of the story.</li> <li>Children asked to select groups of four and given a part of the story to develop and present to the class.</li> <li>Children asked to share their work.</li> </ol>

	<b>Similarity</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Lesson observation</b>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Dominant teacher-led discussion. Children develop responses within context of teacher-led ideas. Continual referral to keywords associated with task.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home):</b> Dominant teacher-led work throughout lesson. Careful use of scaffold to allow children to phrase answers with some developed responses. Continual referral to keywords.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Drama):</b> Initial dominant teacher-led discussion, development of class story and performance appraisal to conclude. Children required to develop structured, improvised work during the central part of the lesson.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Lesson divided into distinct ‘room’ settings. Introduction and initial discussion on carpet, then to individual desk work, and group desk work.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home):</b> Children work individually on desk. Only teacher led Q&amp;A with no peer discussion.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Drama):</b> Circle activity on chairs, group work and formal ‘audience’ layout.</p>
	<b>Phase 2:</b> Teacher relaxed with class and used sanctions to address to individuals. Used humour to bring the class	<b>Phase 2:</b> Children very confident in sharing their stories with the rest of class. Teacher led this part of the lesson informally acknowledging

	<p>together. A lovely relationship with class. Sanctions consistent.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home and Drama):</b> Sanctions addressed to the whole class. Very little addressed to individuals. Sanctions consistent. Occasional reminders to one or two children during activity. At end of activity whole class reprimanded.</p> <p><b>Home:</b> Two warnings given to one child.</p>	<p>all responses by repeating key points or clarifying ideas. Teacher created an atmosphere where there were no wrong responses.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home):</b> Children enjoyed going to the board to share their answers, but were extremely inhibited when asked. They enjoyed the notion of being applauded for correct answers. Teacher quietly spoke with each child to ensure correct answer.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Drama):</b> Children confident in developing class story, but extremely inhibited when showing their work to the class or responding to subject specific questions.</p>
	<p><b>Phase 2 &amp; 3:</b> Continuous teacher movement around classroom supporting individuals. Phase 3 dialogue seemed more imposed.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Children had a real pride in their work and eagerly shared their books with others and me. They articulated their work with clear structured explanations and continually referred to keyword sheets.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home):</b> Children did not share their work with peers. One child marked another's work, but kept his book close to his chest so nobody would see.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Drama):</b> Children struggled with developing group work and interpreting their stories as a performance. They struggled in sharing ideas and expressing different possibilities. It was a closed activity.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> Teacher continually modelled ideas and asked successions of open questions allowing children to explore concepts of Cinderella.</p> <p><b>Phase 3 (Home and Drama):</b> Teachers asked 'safe' questions allowing for limited responses.</p>
<b>Independent learning activity</b>	<p><b>Phase 2 and 3:</b> Children developed identical dialogue categories. However, Phase 3 was slightly more matured as children developed greater confidence.</p>	<p><b>Phase 2:</b> The final raft looked very rushed and not very imaginative.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> The tower was well structured with strong foundations and an excellent piece of work.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> There were four lead children in the group that dominated the task.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Each child made a fairly equal contribution. The 'lead' children from Phase 2 made the majority of decisions, but they listened to others with greater ease. All children relaxed into the task.</p>
		<p><b>Phase 2:</b> There was planning of the initial task without visualisation of the final outcome. It was an exploration of ideas, rather than using ideas to complete a successful outcome.</p> <p><b>Phase 3:</b> Firstly, the end result was planned using a 2-dimensional model. Each step was thought about and agreed. A developed</p>

		sense of questioning using open questions and good discussion using prior knowledge to help support the task.
		<b>Phase 2:</b> A lot of wasted materials with ideas not being thought through and some children dominating the entire task. <b>Phase 3:</b> Each step was discussed with resources agreed. The 'technician' was more confident about releasing materials that were required. The group gelled.
		<b>Phase 2:</b> Range of dialogue was limited with any Socratic structures leading to Mennippean dialogue. The children seemed unable to control the Socratic nature of discussion, which at times was more <i>magistral</i> . <b>Phase 3:</b> Excellent examples of Socratic dialogue using questions to explore concepts. A greater maturity of speech.
<b>Student voice</b>	<b>Phase 2:</b> Children felt ready for transfer. Confident in building and putting teacher faces to names. <b>Phase 3:</b> Children viewed their transfer as going through the door. More than ready for transfer and did not feel the youngest in the school.	<b>Phase 2:</b> Told that the SATs were very important for secondary school and that they would be used to 'judge' their ability. <b>Phase 3:</b> Could not see the point of SATs as they made their teachers 'stressy' and had not been referred to by KS3 teachers.
	<b>Phase 2 and 3:</b> No repetition of curriculum content in any subject area.	<b>Phase 2:</b> Used complicated vocabulary to explain key terms – not always the same words and some had different meanings. <b>Phase 3:</b> Using more consistent and complicated vocabulary that was better explained. However, some words did go over their heads and children did not perceive these as important facts.
	<b>Phase 2:</b> Post SATs children continued with curriculum and described their work as being Level 6. No down time. <b>Phase 3:</b> Felt their teachers had prepared them in terms of curriculum by keeping their learning going. Summer holidays were not too long as they spoke of enjoying the 'Moving On' summer school.	<b>Phase 2:</b> Teacher told class what secondary would be like in terms of sanctions, detentions, homework and level of work. <b>Phase 3:</b> Children felt aggrieved that they had been lied to as there was no real difference between Year 6 and 7 teachers.
		<b>Phase 2:</b> A lot of time was given to SATs in Year 6, which made the teachers stressed and made them nervous of the exams. <b>Phase 3:</b> Did not see the point of so much preparation for the SATs. It was described as a good experience, but interfered with learning by making the teachers stressed. CATs sat at the start of Year 7. Children were told that SATs determined what GCSEs they would get in Year 11 and what they could sit early.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Starter activities for the child voice interviews**